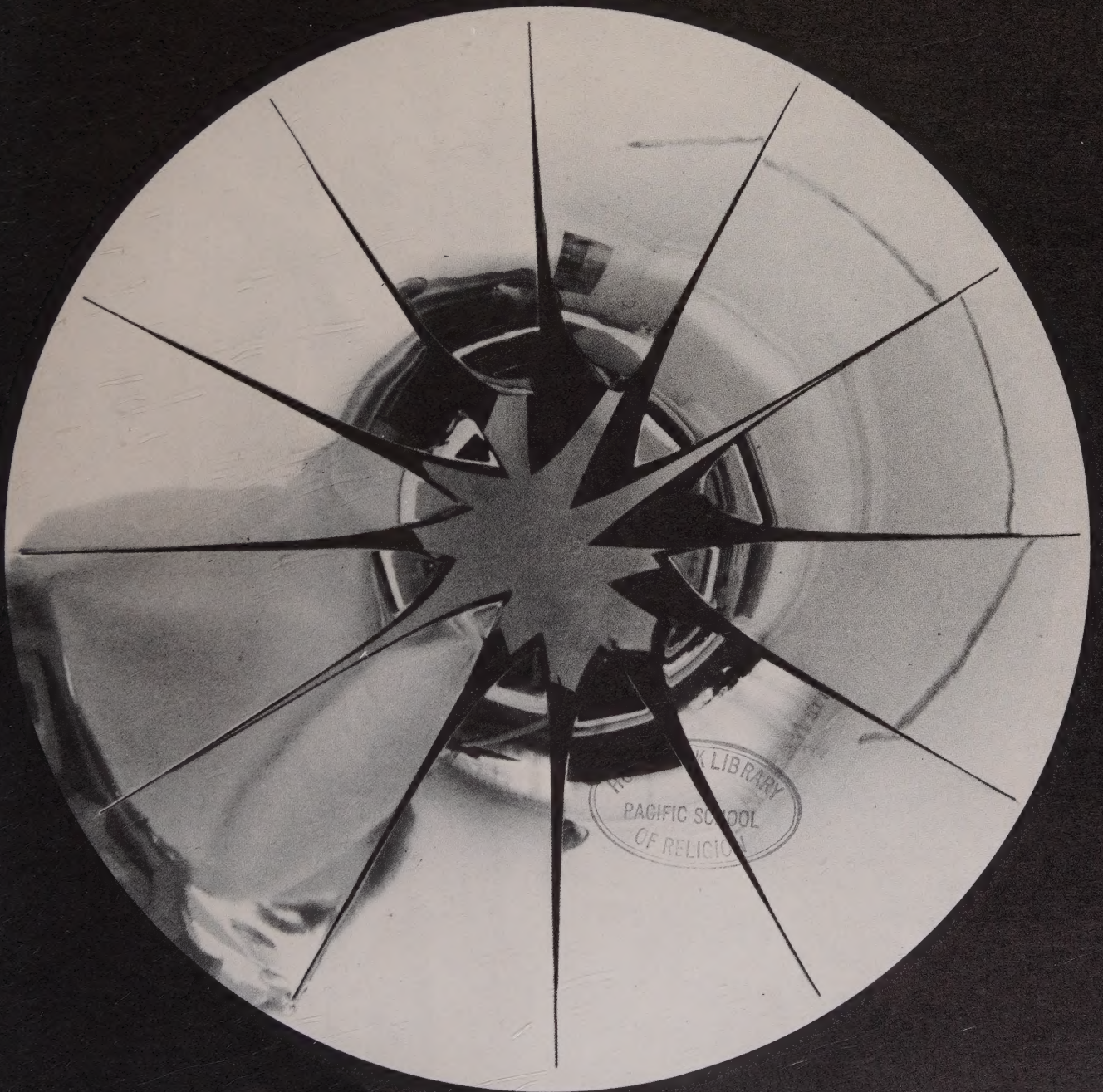


FAITH & FORM

JOURNAL OF THE GUILD FOR RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

AFFILIATE OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

VOL. VIII, FALL 1975





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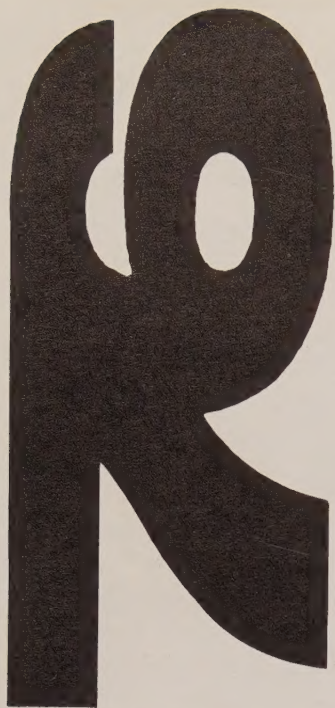
Next Issue—Spring 1976

Cover

Bronze Sculpture "Twelve Tribes"
 Luise Kaish, New York, N.Y.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Notes and Comments	5
New Projects of Interest	6
Architectural Exhibit '75—Honor Award	7
Religious Arts Exhibit '75—Awards	8
The Response of Religious Institutions to Urban Humanism Rabbi Jack Bemporad	9
Architectural Exhibit '75—Merit Awards	12
San Antonio Conference—Post Mortem Eldon F. Wood	15
Restoration and Preservation Mary Ann Beinecke	18
Is There a True Role for Art in the Religious Community? Rabbi Albert Plotkin	21
San Antonio Conference—Reflections The Rev. Richard McAlister, O.P.	25
Index of Advertisers	Cover 3
Artists/Craftsmen Directory	Cover 3



CELEBRATE BICENTENNIAL YEAR IN BOSTON AT THE NATIONAL INTERFAITH CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND ARCHITECTURE

July 6 - 8, 1976 Copley Plaza Hotel

**TRADITION and TRANSITION —
PERSPECTIVE '76**

FEATURING EXHIBITS:

Recent Art and Architecture

WORKSHOPS:

Plan for Restoration and Development of Religious Facilities

Financing Costs of Restoration

Art and Decoration in Restoration of Religious Facilities

A Case Study of Renovation Project Involving Panel of Experts

TOURS:

Points of Historic Interest

Trinity Church

King's Chapel

Old North Church

Points of Contemporary Interest

1st and 2nd Church, Marlborough St. - Paul Rudolph

Charles River Synagogue - Childs, Bertman, Tseckares

MIT Chapel - Eero Saarinen

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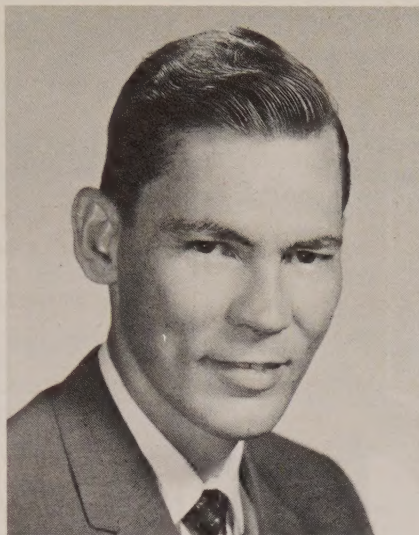
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NOTES & COMMENTS

IN MEMORIAM — Donald H. Speck



There are no words to express our sorrow at the untimely death — at age 48 — of Donald H. Speck, Honorary Member of the GRA and President of the Interfaith Research Center. Those of us who worked with Don in planning the National Conferences knew him to be a man of unquestioned integrity, whose clear thinking and quiet speech illuminated our deliberations — and whose dry wit was a source of delight.

The Rev. Glenn S. Gothard attended the Memorial Service for him at the Northwoods Presbyterian Church, and the following is his comment:

At the August 10 Memorial Service for Donald H. Speck, all signals communicated one message.

The room for worship is the fruit of honest struggle to put into contemporary form our vision of reality. Walls and pews curve around a simple table and strong pulpit, with open Bible. Nothing suggests separating awareness of each other from awareness of God.

Persons present were friends of Donald Speck, but many were meeting his family for the first time. Yet no one felt like a stranger.

Persons who led the service exhibited a confidence rooted in having successfully faced the issues of life and death: Lawrence Bottoms, Moderator of the 114th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.; John F. Anderson, Jr., Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Dallas; and A. Milton Riviere, Pastor of Northwoods Church, Doraville, Ga. Pastor Riviere's sermon included an Essay on Death written by Don at the time of his

mother's death and found by his family among his papers.

Two banners which hung on either side of the chancel had been designed by Don for use by the congregation during worship services. The cover for the printed memorial service, also his design, showed Bible, Bread, Cup, Flame and Cross. The cross, in contrasting color, was done with fingerprint lines.

Surrounded by all this solid testimony to creative work, reminding us of the life style of Donald Speck, we also felt the room filled with awareness of God and each other, climaxed by participation in the Lord's Supper.

After the benediction Don's family remained in the room and as we came to greet them, we felt a faith as solid as the walls of the building itself. We had come to share their grief. We left having been made freshly aware of things that cannot be shaken.

The Rev. Glenn S. Gothard
August 11, 1975

Design Competition
for Eucharistic Congress

The 41st International Eucharistic Congress and the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects are co-sponsoring an architectural competition for design of altar stages for the city's two major sports stadiums.

The structures will make Veterans and John F. Kennedy stadiums suitable for liturgical worship. They will incorporate platforms, altars, audio-visual and lighting systems and movement patterns for celebration of Masses.

Veterans Stadium is a 7-tiered octored that seats 66,000. JFK is 2,350 feet long by 1,450 feet wide, encompassing an area of 61.5 acres. The stage design for JFK should accommodate up to 300,000 viewers both in the stadium and the surrounding site (parking areas).

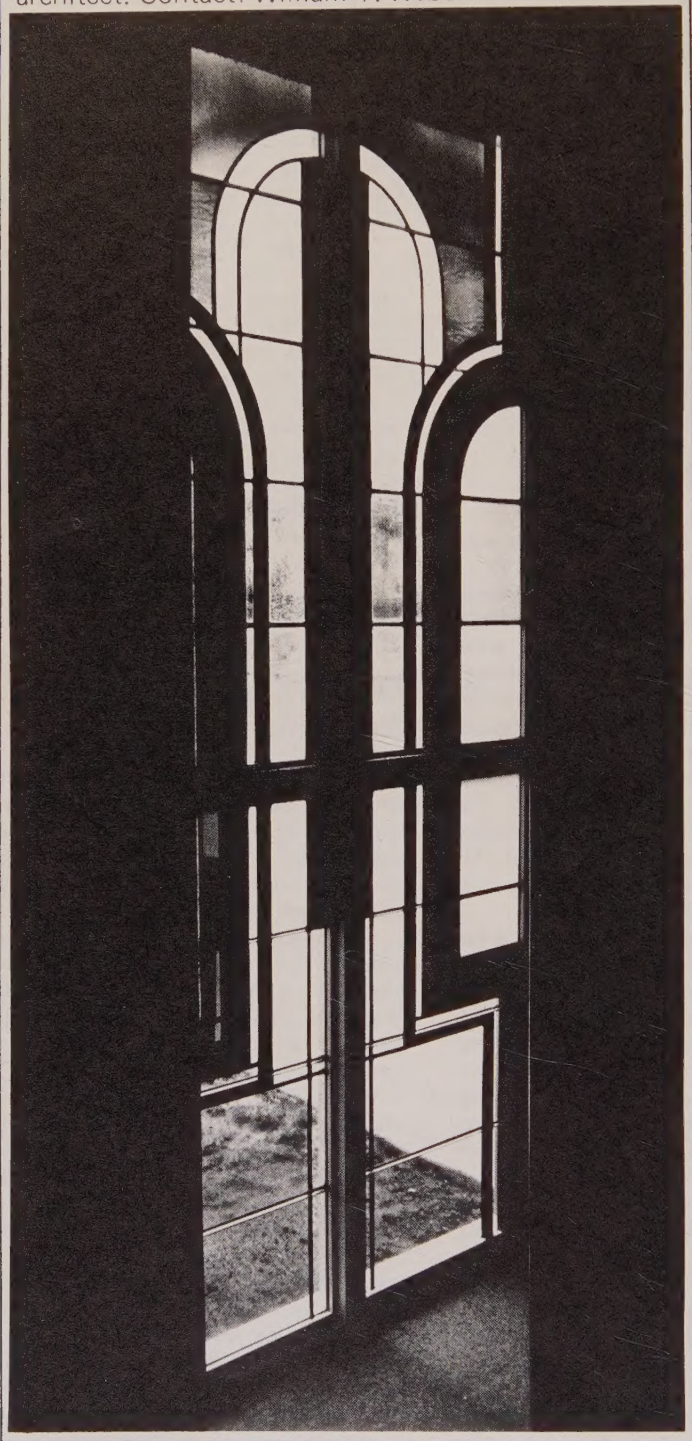
Competitors must be registered architects in the United States. Architects not practicing within the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia chapter of the AIA must have associated with a Philadelphia firm in order to have entered the competition.

More than one million people will gather in Philadelphia, August 1-8, 1976 to participate in the Eucharistic Congress, a major spiritual assembly of world Catholics and other Christians.

Cont. p. 17

A great craft, but not a great mystery.

Stained glass can alter light, completely or partially. It can create a mood or sustain it. It is a great traditional craft that has kept pace with contemporary needs. In scores of ecclesiastical, multi-purpose and commercial buildings for over four decades...from the original design, to the manufacture, to the actual installation...Rambusch Stained Glass Studio has added its distinctive touch to the unique signature of the architect. Contact: William T. Weber

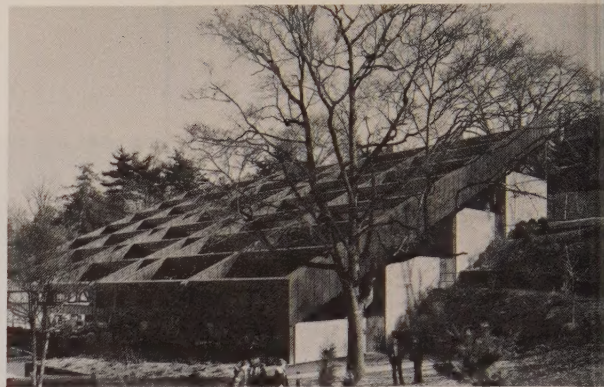


consultation/planning/design/fabrication/installation
stained glass/metal/wood/lighting/cultic appointments

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NEW PROJECTS OF INTEREST



Salanter/Akiba/Riverdale Academy Riverdale, N.Y.

Architects: Caudill, Rowlett, Scott
Houston, Tex.

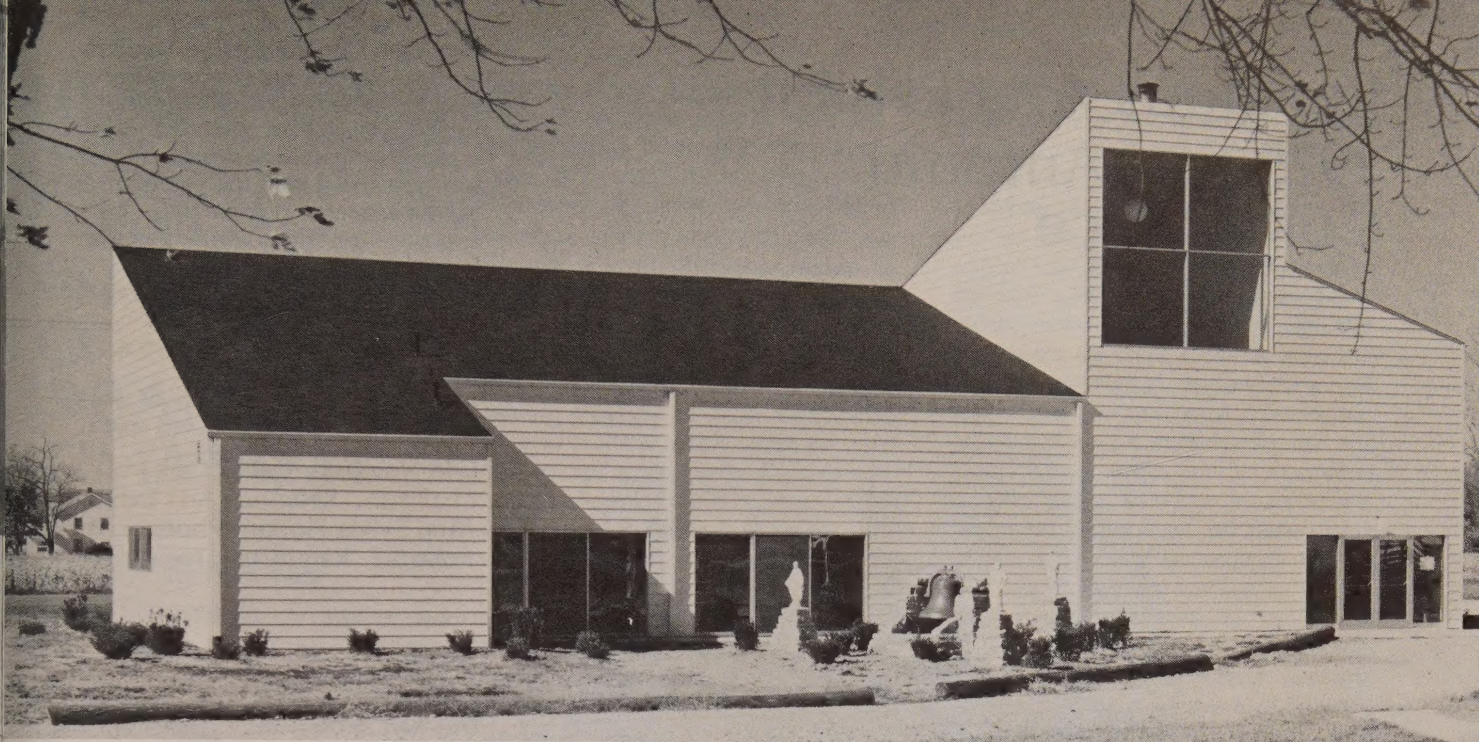
Located on the former estate of the late Arturo Toscanini in the Riverdale section of New York City, the S/A/R Academy was designed to provide a view of the Hudson River while retaining the flat portion of the site for playfields. The result is a vertically open design, which combines a feeling of unity for the entire school with a sense of individuality and variety in the classroom areas.

By stair-stepping down the natural contours of the sloping site, the architects developed an open plan for the academy block of the school. Instructional spaces on two sides of the building connect with a shared central core of administrative and learning resource areas a half-level below the instructional spaces at every level of the building. For easy identification, each level is color-coded and further defined through the use of large, brightly-colored letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Dr. Robert M. Finley, superintendent of the first open-plan school in the U.S., has said: "Too many buildings get in the way of a school's program. This doesn't happen at the Academy. The architect's dynamic solution and use of land open a wide range of program possibilities. Rarely have we seen a building with such tremendous flexibility. It allows you to change any program any time. The measure of that is the fact that it simultaneously and successfully houses two different programs."

The Academy has received a Bard Award for excellence in New York architecture. The Bard Awards were established ten years ago by the City Club of New York in memory of Albert S. Bard, who crusaded for more than half a century to improve the quality of civic design and urban architecture.





Richard Fleischman Architects, Inc.

ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBIT — 1975 San Antonio Conference

The jury for the architectural exhibit at the 1975 San Antonio Conference is pleased to report one Honor Award and seven Merit Awards. In addition, they cite two projects, not usually judged with churches and synagogues, for Honorable Mention Awards, and single out two others for their potential worthiness.

The jury found their duties pleasant and were gratified with the quality of the entries in a time of low religious construction volume.

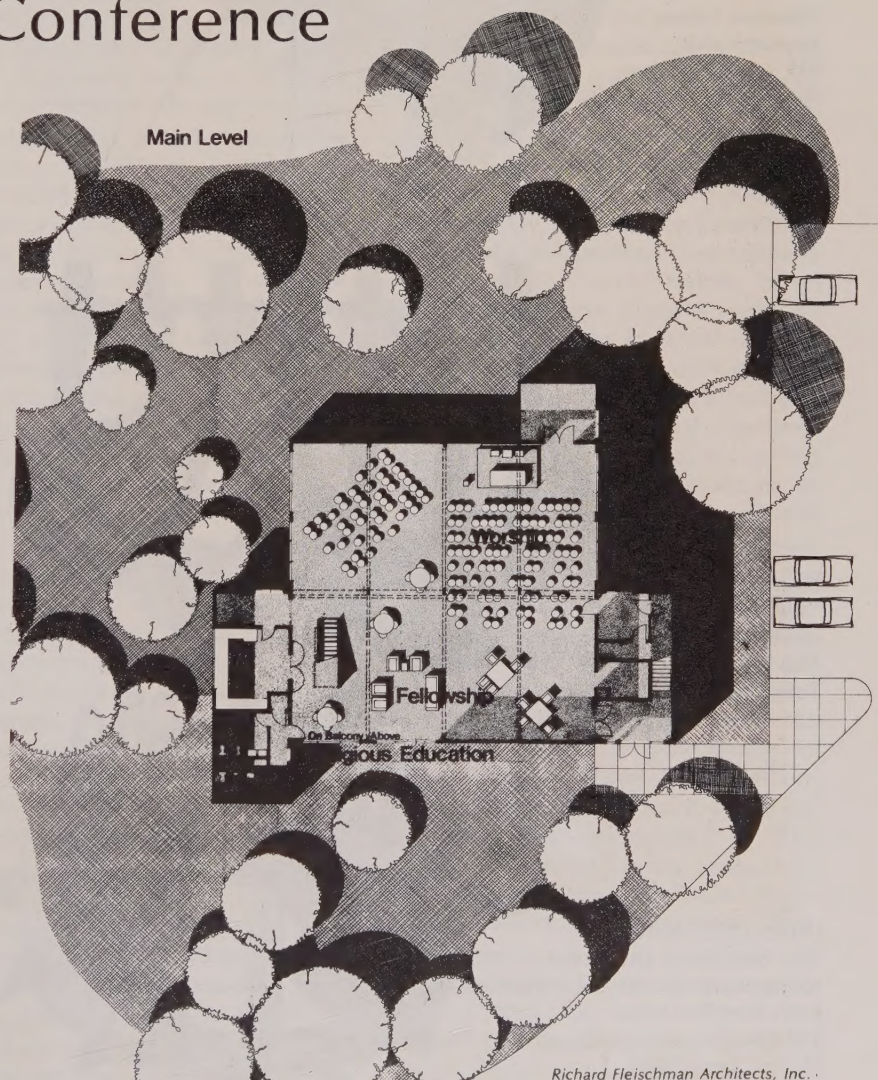
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Downing A. Thomas, AIA

HONOR AWARD
Sacred Heart Church
Morrow County, Oh.

Architects:
Richard Fleischman Architects
Cleveland Heights, Oh.

The simplest, most modest church submitted. The plan is clear and beautifully proportioned. Each window and door is placed with masterly inevitability. The exterior forms are in fine balance, achieving great dignity. Materials are white exterior aluminum siding with aluminum doors and windows. The spaces provide for worship, religious education and administration — all well related.



Richard Fleischman Architects, Inc.

Religious Arts Exhibit — 1975 San Antonio Conference

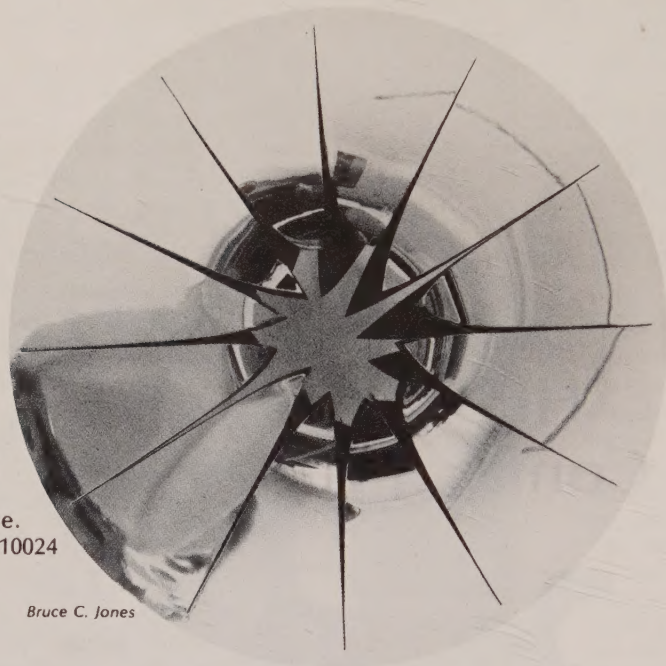
The purpose of the Religious Arts Exhibit at the Annual National Interfaith Conferences on Religion and Architecture is to encourage excellence in all arts intended for religious purposes. We hope to offer a stimulating experience for all who are concerned with the use of art in sacred space; and to provide exposure for artists working in the field.

In addition to the entries accepted for exhibit at the San Antonio Conference, there was shown a running slide presentation representing a wide variety of work being done today for sacred space.

Lyle Novinski, Dallas, Tex.
Chairman, Religious Arts Exhibit Jury
Mrs. Sylvia Plotkin, Phoenix, Ariz.
Robert E. Rambusch, New York, N.Y.

Honor Award
"Joseph's Dream"
William Jeffers
Gail Morton Hanks
Dee McCandless of
Tres Manos (Wallhangings)
1601 Pearl
Austin, Tex. 78701

Honor Award
"Twelve Tribes"
Louise Kaish
610 West End Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10024

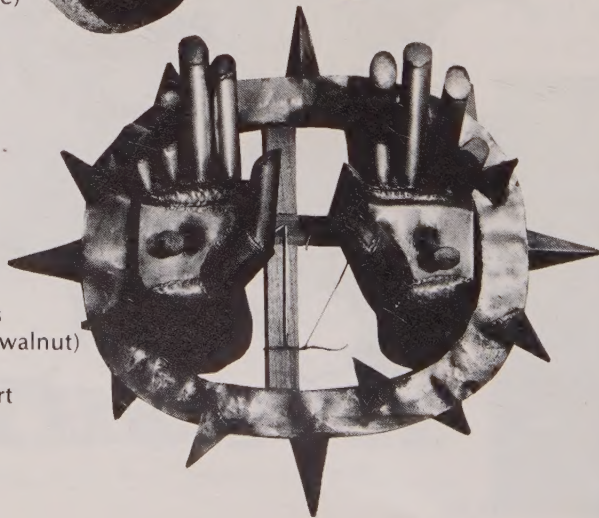


Bruce C. Jones

Honorable Mention
"Menorah"
(welded steel and bronze)
Ted Egri
Taos, N.M. 87571



Honorable Mention
12th Station of the Cross
(copperplated steel and walnut)
Heri Bert Bartscht
1125 N. Canterbury Court
Dallas, Tex. 75208



THE RESPONSE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS TO URBAN HUMANISM*

by
Rabbi Jack Bemporad
Temple Emanu-El
Dallas, Tex.



The response of religious institutions to urban humanism is, of course, an extraordinarily complex and diversified subject. The question posed is involved with four variables, all of which relate to the issue of religion:

1. The dynamics of change and the necessity to re-categorize our understanding of change and stability.
2. The nature of a consumer-oriented society.
3. The nature of technological process.
4. The interpenetration of these three variables and the effect they produce on the nature of our understanding of man.

If we're going to talk about humanism, urban humanism, or any kind of humanism, we can only do that if we have some sense of what we mean as to the nature of man.

In his book *Technology and*

Change, David Schoen claims that the basic problem is that most people, including most educated people, think that society is relatively static. However, he denies the validity of the static society and feels that if we embody a symbolism that makes us unprepared for the future when it arrives, we will be in great trouble. Schoen states that we've usually understood change in the past by imagining that we go from one stable state to another stable state, and that technology is the neutral instrument of that change, that is, of going from one state to another. Secondly, he says, we assume that whatever changes will take place, ultimately, will be for the good. Schoen says that both of these assumptions have to be challenged. Is there really such a thing as a stable framework and the priority of stability? He believes not and gives a number of examples.

An especially challenging one is the gap between training and doing. Men are less able to see their lives as a period of professional training, followed by steady practice of their trade or profession. On the contrary, what one finds — according to all the evidence — is that when people have been trained in something, they have to learn continuously; many of them have to go from one occupation or profession to another. Ten years or so after receiving their Ph.D.'s in one subject, men in some fields find that the questions they've dealt with are more or less obsolete, and they have to re-learn from scratch. Schoen says that the times we live in should be marked "Subject to change without notice." Without notice — why? Mainly because we react to change by what he calls selective inattention. Inasmuch as we don't pay attention to change, suddenly we're surprised when something happens.

Now because of the fact that the framework of stability has disappeared, according to Schoen, and therefore process has become primary and permanence has become secondary, there has been a gradual deterioration of reference points for personal identity and for a sense of self. For example, it is less and less possible to explain who I am in terms of the job I do, the profession I represent, the region of the country in which I live, the institution to which I belong, or the class or race from

which I come. The individual asks how should I act when the foundations of my self and the roots of my action disappear.

Let me illustrate the kind of change we've had just since World War II. We've had four major revolutions in the last twenty-five years: the advent of the atomic age, the space age, the computer age, and most recently the age of biological engineering. All these are technological transformations that have seriously affected our lives. But in order for us to understand change, in order for us to understand technology, we have to ask how change and technology fit into the kind of society we live in.

That question leads me to my second variable — that we live primarily in a consumer-oriented society. When you lived in the Middle Ages and you needed ten tables, you would go to a tablemaker, who would say, "Well that makes ten tables I have to make." He would proceed to make the prescribed ten tables. Then he would spend the rest of his time celebrating some religious holiday, or fishing, or doing nothing — because demand and supply were such that one sought to maintain a stable balance. Today, on the contrary, we have the creation of needs and the production of objects to meet the created needs. Nowadays we simply discover how to motivate people to want certain items and then we produce those items. Or we produce things and then convince people that they need them. Nothing is intrinsically wrong with a consumer-oriented society as long as one can distinguish between items of consumption and ethical values. The difficulty arises in a consumer-oriented society when the distinction between the consumption of perishable things and the consumption of values has been levelled so that there is no longer any sense of values transcending the process of consumption. Hannah Arendt has made, I think, the most profound statement on this subject in "The Crisis in Culture," in her book of essays *Between Past and Future*. Referring to works of art, she says: "from a viewpoint of sheer durability, art works are clearly superior to all other things since they stay longer in the world than anything else. They are the worldiest of all things. Moreover,

* Edited transcript — address at San Antonio Conference on Religion and Architecture — April 1975

they are the only things without any function in the life process of society. Strictly speaking, they are fabricated not for men but for the world which is meant to outlast the life span of mortals, the coming and going of the generations."

She continues: "Cultural objects were first despised as useless by the Philistines, until the cultural Philistine seized upon them as a currency by which he bought a higher position in society, or acquired a higher degree of self esteem." Cultural values are treated now like all other values — mainly exchange values. As in the past, value usually has an economic content. It is something you can buy; it has a certain price. Naturally, when one is dealing with a mass society, which also has a consumer society trying to convince this mass society to consume, then Hannah Arendt is correct. She says: "Mass society wants not culture but entertainment, and the wares offered by the entertainment industry are indeed consumed by society just like any other consumer goods. The products needed for entertainment serve the life process of society even though they may not be as necessary for this life as bread and meat. They serve as the phrase is 'to while away time,' and the vacant time which is whiled away is not leisure time. Strictly speaking, leisure time is that in which we are free from all cares and activities necessitated by the life process, and therefore free for the world and its culture. That's what true leisure time would be. This vacant time is rather left-over time, which is still biological in nature, left over after labor and sleep have received their due. Vacant time which entertainment is supposed to fulfill. The entertainment industry is confronted with gargantuan appetites, and since its wares disappear in consumption, it must constantly offer new commodities. In this predicament, those who produce for the mass media ransack the entire range of past and present culture in the hope of finding suitable material. This material, moreover, cannot be offered as it is. It must be altered in order to become entertainment; it must be prepared to be consumed easily. Mass culture comes into being when mass society seizes upon cultural objects, and its danger is that the life process

of society which, like all biological process, insatiably draws everything available into the cycle of metabolism, that is in the cycle of consumption, will literally consume the cultural objects, eat them up and destroy them. Of course, I am not referring to mass distribution," she says, "when books or pictures and reproductions are thrown on the market cheaply to obtain group sale. This does not affect the nature of the objects in question, but their nature is affected when these objects themselves are changed, rewritten, condensed, digested, reduced to kitsch in reproduction, or in preparation for the movies — this does not mean that culture spreads to the masses but that culture is being destroyed in order to yield entertainment. The result of this is not disintegration but decay — and those who actively promote it are not the Tin Pan Alley composers but a special kind of intellectual, often well-read and well-informed, whose sole function is to organize, decimate and change cultural objects in order to persuade the masses that "Hamlet" can be as entertaining as "My Fair Lady."

No value system transcends the purveying of goods. This is the real danger. Let me give you just one word of illustration from the reporting of news. It is obvious that many people depend upon television to find out what's going on in the world. An article by Robert McNeil some years ago in *Harper's Magazine* entitled "The News on TV and How It Is Made" is pertinent. In it McNeil said: "TV journalists are enmeshed in a system that looks upon news as another commodity, which sells or does not sell, attracts audiences or does not, which like other commodities can be shaped, reworked and manipulated or simply dropped. Reporters contributing to television news shows receive fees ranging from \$25 to \$150 for each item used on a program containing commercials. A man may spend three or four days quietly digging for facts to support a story, only to find himself receiving a fee of \$50 if his story is used, or nothing if his story does not pan out. His colleague, meanwhile, may use the same amount of time rushing to snatch an interview here and putting together a few superficial facts there, may place ten separate

pieces on the air and may as a result pocket \$500. Obviously, the system discourages methodological pursuit of information. The object is to get each story on the air and move on to something else."

In other words, in a consumer oriented society where in fact man is seen as one large stomach and the key is to get the stomach larger and larger so that he can consume more, one can no longer make any distinction concerning the work of the objects of consumption. There is no level that transcends this process of consumption. Thus we have changed that is geared to consumption. And one asks whether it's dangerous if we're constantly consuming mindlessly, then technology comes in to save the day.

This leads to our third variable. The technologists tell us not to worry because technology is going to save us from this dilemma. How does technology save us? By trying to change the way you live? Or by trying to change the habits that you actually live by? No. Technology will come in and bail you out completely. Researchers say that you'll never get people to drive carefully for two reasons: first, because they release their unconscious hostilities once they get behind the wheel, and second, because so many people are taking drugs that one can't guarantee that the pill they've taken that morning won't impair their driving skills. Therefore, because there's no guarantee that they're going to drive carefully, technology can still come up with a solution to the problem — namely a crash-proof car. Take another example. We all know that smoking is no good for us. Sometime back, a researcher at Columbia University invented a nicotine filter. Columbia immediately insisted upon having all the rights to it without even testing. Even though it turned out to be worthless, it did represent a technological way of resolving a social issue.

There's really nothing wrong with that, and of course a great deal of technology is very important — certainly medical technology is. But the technological mentality that I am talking about is a very different thing.

Note what Alvin Weinberg, of the Atomic Energy Commission, has said. In an article called "Can Technology

replace Social Engineering?" — treating the subject of whether technology can convince people to change their lives, he says: "If I were to be asked who has given the world the more effective means of achieving peace, our great religious leaders who urged man to love their neighbors and thus avoid fights, or a weapons technology that simply presents man with no rational alternative to peace, I would vote for the weapons technology. The peace we get," he continues, "is at best terribly fragile. I can't deny that. Yet, as I shall explain, I think technology can help stabilize our imperfect and precarious peace."

Now we begin to wonder. Is technology really the solution to all our problems? It's one thing to have technology do the things it ought to do. It's another thing when technology makes claims that far over-reach anything that technology has a right to claim. Theodore Warden, director of the space stations and planetary systems at Douglas Space Center, was very concerned about unemployment. He said, "Unemployment connotes idle leisure. If our people feel unwanted, unneeded and frustrated, and they will feel that way if they don't have jobs, the conversion of this destructive leisure will be easy." He says that personality control drugs will be available. "Research into new pharmaceuticals promises to produce for us an array of drugs that we can use to tailor our moods and personalities." He gives some illustrations: "Wives of tomorrow might be able to drop into their husbands' morning cup of coffee an anti-grouch pill. Pills for euphoria or mystic contemplation might become commonplace. You take a certain pill when you go to church or synagogue. As we reach for a control mechanism, we leave behind freedom because we wish to be controlled more. Frightening but more powerful will be the artificial mood modifiers which will range from mild stimulants to personality control and personality selection drugs."

Now a number of things about the technological mentality are, in my opinion, extraordinarily frightening. Let me elaborate. If one says that the means of resolving human problems is through technology, what happens is that such a resolution completely

neglects the broader aspects of these problems and negates their full, human context. To state, as Weinberg does, that technology can solve the problem of war and that the hydrogen bomb has done more for peace than all the religious leaders in history shows quite clearly where this mentality leads. The attempt to say that all questions should be solved through technological procedures leads us to a situation that may very well be irreversible, since we are not fully aware of all the implications and the effects that technological innovations produce both in our environment and in ourselves. It is this lack of understanding of the consequences of technological innovation which frightens me. Just think, we tested atom bombs extensively without having the foggiest notion that they led to such disastrous effects upon human beings as thyroid cancer. We dumped DDT everywhere and then we found that it threatened the world's ecological balance.

The problem with technology is its boomerang effects that are unforeseen. It's one thing to introduce a new development on a relatively small scale or to introduce it where you have controls, because one is not introducing it in a consumer society with its consumption-oriented values. But it's another thing to introduce it where you have no controls.

When confronted with the possibility of genetic manipulation, of transforming the very nature of human life, then problems really arise. The possibility — perhaps soon to be an actuality — that through genetic manipulation on individuals society can, let's say, produce engineers, or whatever it desires, is chilling. What I'm warning against in effect is that practice outruns theory in technology. Furthermore, we may get involved with irreversible changes, and finally, there is the danger of no over-all coordination of means. Technology functions in terms of the most efficient means, and if everyone is trying to follow the most efficient means, the result is the overwhelming problem of lack of coordination.

In an article, "What Man Can Make of Man," Carl H. Hertz asks: "Is man really ready to play God?" He says

that one set of men, the biotechnicians, will intervene in the lives of other people, "determining the traits of other people's children, presenting parents with children not of their own procreation. The object of this programming, in whatever form it is carried out, may easily turn out to be the poor and the perilous, presumably 'inferior' stock. For any application of this knowledge will take place within the framework of the existing distribution of power and privilege. Conceivably, the privileged may desire to fabricate a class to exploit." He continues: "Specifically my question is not primarily whether genetic programming and other developments will come, but under what conditions and limitations and with what protection of human rights and prudent constraint of utopianism. How shall limits and directions be set? How does the creature — become creator — understand himself, his powers, and his responsibilities?"

Elting E. Morrison claims that technology tends to create its own environment and set of conditions. Even more simply, "as the mechanism increases in power and scale, the tendency is to fit men into the machinery rather than to fit the machinery into the contours of the human situation. We may be caught in the irony that at the very moment when we by our wit have developed the means to give us considerable control over our resistant natural environment, we finally have produced in the means themselves an artificial environment of such complication that we cannot control it."

How do these variables I have discussed affect the nature of man? Quite simply — there is no way of avoiding an internal transformation. The internal world of man, or the internal order of man is shaken by the transformation of the external world; the manipulation and transformation of the environment will reshape and dull and annihilate man's internal existence. Man is not just the agent — he is also the object of the technological change. For this reason man is in such a precarious position. Never before has man had so much power to do — and yet never before has he felt so powerless.

This is the dilemma of any kind of humanism in our time. What exacer-

Cont. p. 16

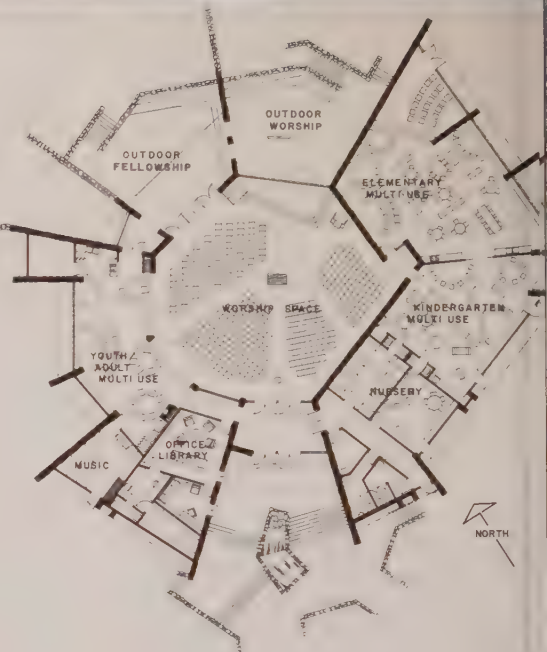


David Sullenberger

MERIT AWARD
University Presbyterian Church
El Paso, Tex.

Architects:
The Pierce Lacey Partnership,
Dallas, Tex.
Foster, Henry, Henry, Thorp, El Paso,
Tex.

This complex is distinguished by a dynamic floor plan exploding from a central worship space. The strength of the form and texture of the native rock masonry walls anchors the diverse volumes into an unified mass and echoes the mountain forms beyond. The strong masonry again masks some detailing problems. A good strong central worship space relates fundamentally with all other spaces.



Architectural
Exhibit
1975
San Antonio
Conference

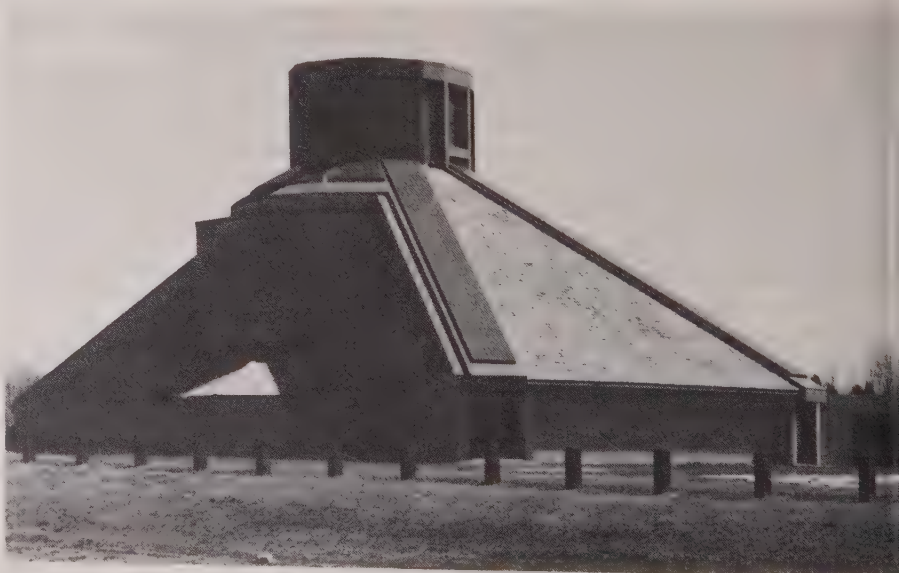
MASTER
PLAN
PHASING



MERIT AWARD
St. Timothy Church
Centreville, Va.

Architects:
Lawrence Cook, Falls Church, Va.
David Gallagher, Alexandria, Va.
A well-massed complex, carefully
planned and thoughtfully detailed

with a sensitive relationship between
the worship space and the ancillary
buildings. The jury had some
reservation about what may be
glare-producing skylights between
the structural elements. The entire
composition is a commendable
statement on both the interior and
exterior.



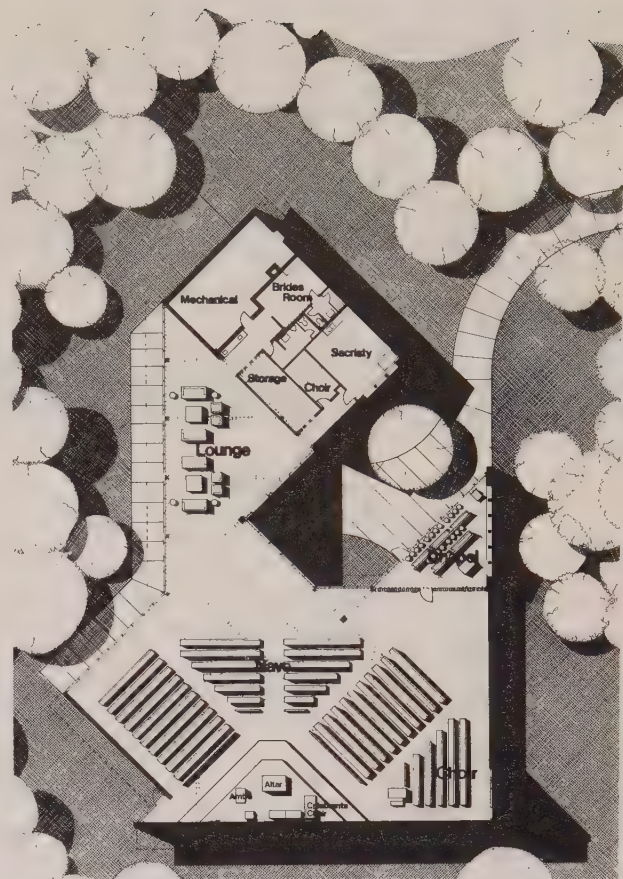


Richard Fleischman Architects, Inc.

MERIT AWARD
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Cleveland, Ohio.

Architects:
Richard Fleischman Architects
Cleveland Heights, Ohio.
A charming enclosure of exterior
and interior spaces, fresh in spirit,
simple in form. The plan provides for

three major well-juxtaposed spaces:
(1) nave to seat 500 having an
intimate seating plan; (2) a triangular
library-lounge which also serves as a
narthex; and (3) a small triangular
chapel plus supporting areas.
Materials are exposed wood frame,
brick and natural finished wood
shingles.



Richard Fleischman Architects, Inc.

ip MacMillan James & Associates



ip MacMillan James & Associates

MERIT AWARD
St. Stephen Lutheran Church
Bloomington, Minn.

Architects:
Bergsted, Wahlberg, Bergquist,
Rohkohl
St. Paul, Minn.
Consultant:
Dr. Frank Kacmarcik
St. Paul, Minn.

An unusual decision to convert an
existing fellowship hall into worship
space has led to a solution of
distinction. The flexible seating in an
unsophisticated space is given
distinction by the quality of the
chancel furniture. The entire plan is
commendable for its directness and
simplicity.



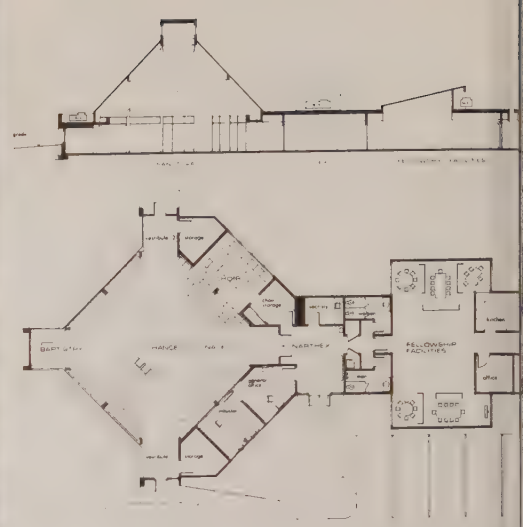


Frederick Toma

Architectural Exhibit — 1975 San Antonio Conference

MERIT AWARD
Peace Lutheran Church
Oxford, Miss.

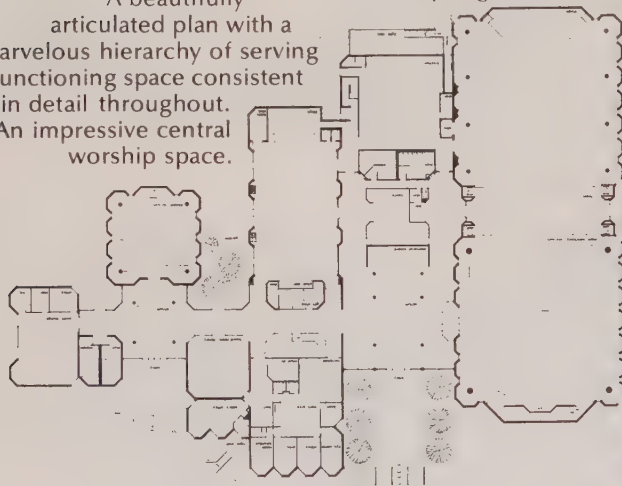
Architects:
Hill/Armour Associated Architects,
Memphis, Tenn.



A very strong exterior expresses providing a symbol in its commu. An unique use of sanctuary space allows appropriate ultimate expansion. The central worship allows its use as a theatre in the round or as a meeting hall. The development is skillfully accomplished.

Architects: Cohen and Haft, Holtz, Kerxton,
Karabekir & Associates
Silver Spring, Md.

A beautifully articulated plan with a marvelous hierarchy of serving functioning space consistent in detail throughout. An impressive central worship space.



MERIT AWARD
B'Nai Israel Synagogue Complex
Rockville, Md.

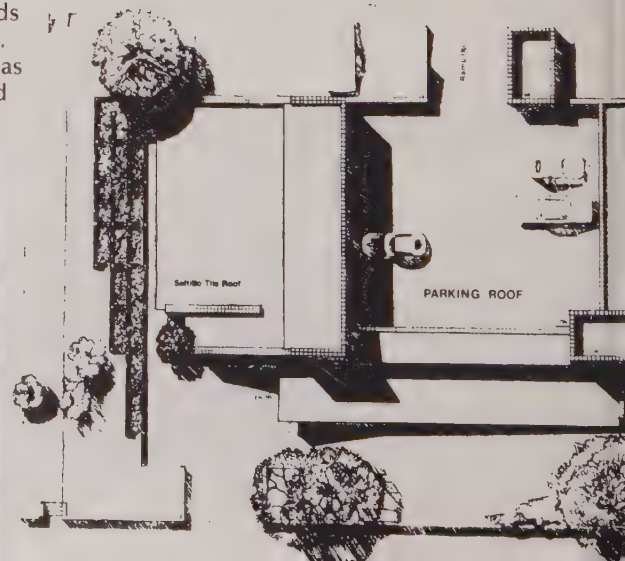
Ronald N. And



MERIT AWARD
Student Center for the Lutheran
Church (near a large Texas
university)

Architects:
Ford, Powell & Carson
San Antonio, Tex.

An unusually well-designed flexible worship and fellowship space. The crisp detailing in both buildings and chancel furniture adds quality to the environment created. The building with its roof parking has been skillfully and tastefully related to the site and to its community.



1975 SAN ANTONIO CONFERENCE — POST MORTEM

by

Eldon F. Wood, AIA
Alexandria, Va.
President, GRA

In April of 1975 there was gathered in San Antonio a group of about 150 persons who were in some way interested or involved in religion and architecture. This Annual National Interfaith Conference on Religion and Architecture was one of a long distinguished line of annual conferences held in many cities around the country and concerned with a great variety of currently popular themes. These themes have always been developed to give the architect, the artist and the liturgist a maximum opportunity to expand his thinking in the development of his particular role in religious building.

The architect, being of a vision-oriented profession, is encouraged to develop a visual symbolism for those needs and ideas presented by the liturgist. The success of such symbolic representation depends upon the sensitivity of the designer's perception and his ability to translate the liturgical statement into a physical statement with such creativity that the liturgy will be reinforced by the liturgical setting.

The role of the liturgist (or whatever title should be assigned to the one who officially represents religion) is that of theological interpreter. There is required a vision of the abstract and an understanding of spiritual experiences that allows proper symbolic representation that will extend such experiences to the greater involvements in life. To put it another way, the liturgist should seek to understand theological symbolism on a spiritual level and be able to translate this understanding to an intellectual level.

In order to fulfill any of these roles, it is necessary for the individual to subject himself occasionally to a brutalization of the thinking process wherein ideas and practices can be torn apart, analyzed and reassembled. The resulting reaction can be shattering at first, leading to com-

plete confusion. Hopefully, there will follow a clearer, more objective understanding of one's original premises. The conclusions of the Rev. Richard McAlister elsewhere in this issue typify one such reaction. Father McAlister's convictions may not have been changed by the Conference but his exposure to the broader spectrum of ideas gave him a better understanding of just what it is that gives real substance to his convictions.

Father McAlister addresses another characteristic of the annual conference, namely, the interfaith make-up of the program and the participants. This diversity could also lead to complete confusion but this is actually what provides the greatest strength. No one really expects unanimity from such an interfaith representation, and so there is a demand for both sincerity and understanding.

To be agreed with constantly may satisfy some but this condition has never existed at a national conference where the variety of differences has been legion. There have been ego trips entitled "don't build any more religious buildings until —" which have been great for shock and notoriety, and may have even added some tempering sanity to both theology and design. Reactions to such radical statements have led to backlashes of all kinds, wherein the justified need for churches and synagogues and temples has been strongly debated and defended. Some have gone so far as to say that religious buildings are not only necessary but the more monumental the better.

Then along came 1975 and San Antonio with the theme of "Urban Humanism." In other years at other places urbanism denoted violence, social injustice and racial strife, leading to much self-flagellation but not very many workable solutions. San

Antonio was different. Here urbanism was beautiful. Here people had used their natural and human resources to alter the tide of undesirable urban development. There are few monuments as such (except the Alamo which is another story entirely), because most of those places of great historical significance are being utilized for some beneficial purpose. A former convent is being restored by and for a group involved in teaching and performing a variety of handicraft skills. An abandoned, baronial brewery will be a combination museum and an arts and crafts merchandising center. San Jose Mission is a museum but it also houses a working congregation, and a river once scheduled to be filled and paved is now the very essence of the city's character. The human resources of San Antonio are also obvious in the vast array of national origins and religions in the population make-up. To the early inhabitants — Indians, Spaniards, Chicanos, Frenchmen and "Americans" — have been added Scandinavians, Jews, Germans and other Central Europeans, each adding his special contribution to the formation of a great urban identity.

If the city overwhelmed the Conference, no one really cared because this was a "soft" conference. The material was useful but not controversial. The exhibits, while good, had no surprises. The speakers were outstanding but there were no bombshells. Yet for real impact, few speakers have excelled the straightforward presentation at the closing banquet. O'Neil Ford is a resident of San Antonio, an architect of international stature and a man capable of matching the style of his delivery to the message itself. Intermixed with a slide show covering everything from automobiles to the fabric of a Mexican village was a sim-

Cont. p. 29

bates this dilemma is that when we turn to philosophy and those areas that should give us a vision of man — instead of giving us a vision of man who has control over these three variables, namely change, consumer-society and technology — they give us a vision of man totally incapable of coping with them. The dominant philosophers of existentialism — Heidegger, Sartre — say that man comes from nothingness; he encounters nothingness; he has a sense of nothingness; he has an awareness of the precariousness of his being — his powerlessness in the face of the constant changes that beset him and engulf him. Philosophical thinking has effected a total transformation of conceptualizing man wherein reason has abdicated and will become dominant. The rational, goal-oriented nature of man is being atrophied and his will and desires are being expanded without end. I don't think anyone has said this better than Gabriel Marcel in his book on technology: "The materialistic mode of thought in our time is showing itself capable of bringing into being a world which more and more tends to verify its own materialistic posture." Here in the place of materialistic, we can put technological, and we find in effect that the technological society tends to verify and validate its own technological posture. It does so by de-emphasizing all else and concentrating on the technological in itself.

Marcel says: "Does not the invasion of our life by techniques today tend to substitute satisfaction on a material level for spiritual joy? Satisfaction on the material level for spiritual disquiet. And do not the satisfied and the unsatisfied tend to come together in a common mediocrity? The fact is that to the average man today, whose inner life tends to be a rather dim affair in any case, technological progress seems the infallible method by which he can achieve a sort of generalized comfort apart from which he finds it impossible to imagine happiness." He continues: "Technological achievements tend to seem more and more the chief, if not the only mark of man's superiority to the animals." In the era of absolute technology, freedom

and identity must take on a new meaning or become meaningless. That's where the whole issue of urban humanism comes in.

Victor Ferkiss in his book *Technological Man* has summed it up: "Other men can change your society, your economy, and your physical environment. Eventually, they will be able to force you to live in a world with neither trees nor oceans, if they choose. Running and hiding becomes increasingly difficult. They can make you love them so that you need not go to the stake. They can alter your identity by controlling how you are brought up and what your experiences are. They can even program your children genetically in advance of birth — but perhaps more disturbing is the fact that you can do all these things yourself. You can change your appearance or even your sex, your mood and your memory. You can even decide what you want your children to look like, but if you can be whatever you want to be, how will you distinguish the real you from the chosen you?" Who is it that is doing the choosing? That's the problem with any kind of humanism. So we're thrown back on what is the ultimate nature of man — and until we've resolved that problem, we can't even begin to talk about these other issues.

Man is constituted by his inner-relationships. He's not a self-sufficient substance, having his own invulnerable principle which works itself out in his growth. Rather man is continuously in a give-and-take balance with his environment. Here Whitehead's term "mutual immanence" is more exact. The idea that man is constituted by his relationships raises some critical issues with respect to his nature, his freedom and his possibilities. Now the technological mentality tends to reinforce the image of man as a creature of impulses and desires. Can a man so reduced control technology? That's the question.

Can an atrophied man, who has become an enlarged stomach, control technology? Is it purely accidental that technology has become dominant at a time when men's values are sensate, to use Sirokin's designation, namely only concerned with pleasure and gratification. There is very little in man's self-image, as

presented by philosophy today which can in any way be capable of controlling technological growth. You see, change must be made by man. We must be the subjects of agents of change, however much we may also be the objects of such transformation. And it's here I think that religion has to begin to raise its voice and make some response to this. May I say that here is what I think becomes the fundamental problem of religious institutions. The fundamental problem of religious institutions is to cope with these four variables in a manner that reaffirms the spiritual character of man, as opposed to the high-grade, animalistic, consuming, technology-oriented character of man. And therefore I believe that the real task of man — and thus the real task of religious institutions — is to give man a sense of self, a sense of his own integrity in the midst of a society that fragmentizes him.

The task of religious institutions is to help man go through these stages of transformation — to help orient goals and ends in terms of ethical norms. It seems to me that the real task of religion today is to make some sense of what these ethical norms are and to orient men's lives so that they are aware of these norms. A religious institution has to be a place for spiritual repair in a world that is basically fragmentizing and dehumanizing. Increasingly we will find that since technology requires a knowledge explosion — not knowledge in the sense of wisdom but knowledge in the sense of know-how, in the sense of knowing effective means — our parishioners are wont to be technologically educated in a way that far transcends anything that we've had or experienced in the past. So it seems to me that the task of religion in our day must be to embody spiritual forms in such a way as to help the individual cope with these variables through some kind of integrity, some kind of goal orientation, some kind of ethical norms. This seems to be the challenge of today.

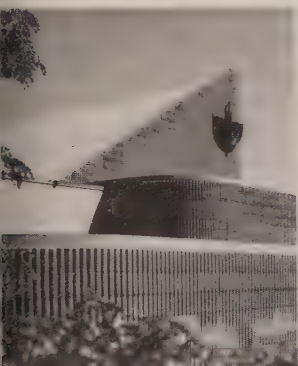
How can one achieve personal integration, creativity, openness — all those things that make for the self-conscious living of life? I think that the only way we can approach this

Cont. p. 29

Boston: **A Living Laboratory** Preservation News, August 1975)



1st and 2nd Church



Charles River Park Synagogue
Hutchins Photography, Inc.



Old St. Stephens Church

"What is Boston? Ask a 'proper Bostonian' and you will be told that Boston means a sense of tradition, of style, not found in other cities. An educator will tell you of the city's world-renowned schools, colleges and universities. An architect will tell you about its buildings — from the designs of Charles Bulfinch and H. H. Richardson to Walter Gropius and I. M. Pei. A historian will talk about the seeds of the American Revolution sown there 200 years ago. And an author will tell you how much he hopes for increased sales if his next book or play is 'banned in Boston.' Indeed Boston is all of these things and more. But for preservationists it is a living laboratory where new programs and ideas are constantly being tried."

The 1976 National Interfaith Conference on Religion and Architecture, to be held in Boston, July 6-8 at the Copley Plaza Hotel will attempt to provide a perspective on the changing tradition in religious design over a 200-year period. Plenary and workshop sessions will concern themselves with various aspects of restoration and renewal of religious facilities. Included in the Conference program will be a tour of significant examples of historic and contemporary design.

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STAINED GLASS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION*

by

Mrs. Mary Ann Beinecke
President,
Hoosuck Community
Resources Corporation
North Adams, Mass.

I am an active Preservationist. But what is Preservation? There is virtually no *common* understanding about Preservation. We all have a *sense* that we mean the same thing, but believe me it is no *common sense*. I have rarely heard anything like common sense when Preservation is bruited about. It has a mystique, seeming to belong to the privileged few who are in the know. The entire subject is fraught with "no-nos."

Preservation cannot succeed in any relevant manner until the majority of the citizens of this country understand that Preservation is a viable alternative to other action. We must reach a common understanding of what Preservation means; we must show it to be meaningful — to be relevant — to be understood by more than a handful of people.

Preservation that is elitist will increasingly lose the sense of priority because it remains outside the mainstream of concern. A sense of urgency is essential to process and communication is essential to a sense of urgency. Communication implies "with" rather than communication "to." I continue to believe that the real problem is just that — lack of communication — and even when dialogue takes place, few people really listen and there exists a basic lack of comprehension and agreement as to the meaning of words. I can illustrate my point by discussing a quotation from a National Trust publication, *Historic Preservation*:

"Preservation leaders have told us to be activists. We tie ourselves to

trees or buildings so they will not be torn down. We picket in front of threatened structures. We write letters to our Congressmen and other government officials. We petition in court to save a park from being replaced by an interstate highway. In a world becoming increasingly indifferent to history and historical landmarks and sites, we must be activists if we are to put across the importance of preservation. In most cases, preservation will not come about if we sit back in our rocking chairs and merely hope that a building will be saved from the wrecker. The preservationist must get out of the rocking chair and fight for the building."

Getting in or out of rocking chairs is not the point; getting out of a rocking chair to save a building may not help. Might it be better to stay in the rocking chair and think? What does it mean to be an activist? I had always thought of an activist as one who actually did something in contrast to one who talked about it. It appears, however, that it signifies a person who works to effect social change through citizen involvement.

Conservation, Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation, Reproduction, Reconstruction, Renewal, Re-use, ReCycle are words closely related. Without reference to a dictionary, I am going to tell you what these words mean to me. In doing so, it will probably become immediately obvious that we have a semantic difficulty.

CONSERVATION — To treat so it can continue to exist, to save for future use, to ration.

PRESERVATION — To keep in cotton batting, store in the attic, pickle, maintain in its present condition, to seal off from contact.

RESTORATION — To fix up. Put back to its original shape, appearance and condition — good health and spirits — active.

REHABILITATION — To help, to support, to prop up, change, repair to service once more.

REPRODUCTION — An imitation, a new something, a copy, not as good as the original.

RECONSTRUCTION — To build again, to remember.

RENEWAL — Another chance, clean up, start over, a new look.

RE-USE — Same old thing, gradually wearing out.

RE-CYCLE — Conservation of energy and resources. A new product from old ingredients.

"The preservationist must get out of the rocking chair and fight for the building." How do we define saving buildings? Is it really Historic Preservation we are concerned about? Local history? Architectural history? Ethnic history? Contemporary history?

Why should we knock ourselves out to save some old building, which no longer has an economic use, while we simultaneously ignore and allow the ugly and the cheap, the throwaway, the neon in the new? Should we not be as concerned and informed about the proposed design for the new hotel as we are with the earlier design for the old railroad station? Were the citizens who allowed the latter better informed about aesthetic matters and material skills than we?

Restoration is like a good spring cleaning — good for the soul. In North Adams, Mass. we are about to begin restoration of the exterior of The Windsor Mill. The architects are arguing about whether the brick exterior should be restored to appear as new, or whether the patina of age should be left. The decision of the architects now is to wash it because it is thought that the local citizenry will be disappointed if the appearance is not greatly altered. In doing so, the surface protection will be reduced. It will be less conserved, more restored and not preserved. How objects and buildings are saved in the first place and brought to the attention of experts is, I think, preservation. Preservation, then, is a matter of judgment. Judgment as to whether an object has been designed and made in a manner fitting and proper to its use and material requires education. It requires comparison. The more Sung Chinese vases I see, the easier it is going to be for me to select the one to preserve as most representative not necessarily of Sung vases but as most representative of the best of Sung vases.

I am not terribly concerned about getting out of a rocking chair and fighting for a building. I've done that and it doesn't necessarily work. I do believe in getting out and fighting for

* Summary of statement presented at San Antonio Conference on Religion and Architecture, April 1975

a whole, for a community in which balance may once more be restored, fragmentation mended and total environmental education and planning implemented by professionals. I do think we should be activists in the sense of working together for social change. If we cannot adjust ourselves to new ways that are old ways, human ways, we will be doomed to fail. I do not think the world is growing increasingly indifferent to history and the landmarks of history. I see just the reverse.

For too many years the landmark attitude has been out of context and unrelated to the needs of the community. Needs unquestionably change, or at the least are re-defined. We can assist in a re-definition of need. If we want preservation to become an accepted part of the ongoing flow, we have to get it on the agenda.

However, if each of us were to take responsibility for maintaining and preserving all that former generations built and used — whether we need it or not — we are going to have precious little time left in which to create anything ourselves. If, however, we concern ourselves with change, with building new ways for today and tomorrow, we will find not only a usefulness but a need for the old — for now and for the immediate future. What we seem to have lost is a sense of continuum.

Old cities made sense. They grew in response to human needs in relation to the geography. There is an organic logic in their framework and a meaningful link between buildings, neighborhoods, streets and nature. They were built at a time when the automobile was not a way of life, and when people of all walks of life not only worked together but lived near one another within walking distance from work. The reason for these cities may long since have disappeared and the framework may have become obscured, but careful archaeological study has revealed the mechanics of this framework, from which one can reconstruct former modes of existence.

In order to test whether indeed the social consciousness of a region could be raised to such a level that the whole became a community in the true sense of working together to renew its identity, I came out of my

comfortable rocking chair to become involved in North Adams, Mass. and the Berkshire Mountain region.

My intent was to demonstrate by means of a real situation that historic preservation, arts and crafts, education could function as *the means* for revitalization of the sinking economy of this distressed area. Only in a real project would the real problems prototypical of any city be isolated, the emotions and prejudices bared. Searching for solutions to these problems, testing methods, could point the way for other cities and towns, could expose ineffective codes, rules, laws, programs at the local, regional, state and federal levels. It would also identify the funding mechanisms open to any city seeking to renew itself, to pull itself up by its bootstraps.

This open-ended project would succeed only if the community decided it needed it to succeed. It therefore had to be carefully nurtured until such time as that community was mature enough in its choices to make decisions. This time-consuming process, in the end, would be the most effective.

The private non-profit corporation that was formed as a community development corporation will be three years old this June. We have four historic districts in the National Register — including most of the churches — and we have carried all four through the pre-planning, planning and conceptual stages. We have finished schematics on two and implementation begins next month on exterior restoration of buildings along a 19th century street of stores and residences and the exterior of a 150,000 sq. ft. mill complex. Street and park renovation and landscaping of these two and a major entrance to the city begins at the end of summer as will the interior restoration of the mill. We have been successful in bringing a developer to town who has retained our architects to design the Urban Renewal area in the heart of the city. We are now programming the interior of The Windsor Mill to house workshops for those artisans in The Windsor Guild and the Windsor Guild School. Many are already in - house. An architect - environmentalist has joined the architectural staff so that with the eyes of an environmentalist in the body of

an architect (and the human commitment to change that that implies), he will design for the future viability of the project and plan to utilize alternative energy resources.

I have rambled on a bit about conservation and preservation as it related to getting a job done, to awakening a new urban humanism, but I have said little about Restoration. The subject of Restoration is a touchy one for me. I have very real doubts about the interpretation of the word because it is unfinished. Restored to what? This has been the single cause of the most mischief. I believe in use and I do not understand how anyone can restore anything unless the use is known, and its economic viability is ascertained. And yet, the entire country is bewailing the fact that certain buildings are being torn down. They will continue to be torn down, and they should be if they are not perceived as useful for any reason. After the local Historical Society has restored and occupied the mansion of one of its most prestigious local families, what happens to the rest of the town? Are we really restoring a city when all the important wealthy homes are museums, the former places of industry removed, the small row houses and farmhouses destroyed, hotels razed in favor of Holiday and Sheraton Inns, commercial streets gutted for Urban Renewal, center cities dead because of shopping centers outside of town? Who's kidding who? Now is the opportunity for change. The demise of the automobile and the economy is forcing the closing of a multitude of A&P's. The challenge for tomorrow might well be "How do we adapt shopping centers and schools to use?"

I am terribly excited over the opportunities I see right now on the horizon. *Something magical is happening.* It has to do with worship, with people together, with concern, with commitment, with striving, with beauty, with hands-on, with materials, with work. The truth can be seen in that our young were the first to perceive this vision. It will last. Some of us who are fortunate indeed are swept up into it. That's what Restoration is — it's Resurrection. From the old will come the new. But it must be new. It is the creation that is the process that sweeps all before it. ■



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IS THERE A TRUE ROLE FOR ART IN THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY?*

by
Rabbi Albert Plotkin
Temple Beth Israel
Phoenix, Ariz.

The topic for this afternoon's discussion: "Is There a True Role for Art in the Religious Community?" is both provocative and challenging. I view art as the handmaiden of religion. As philosophy was the handmaiden of theology, so art serves as the handmaiden of religious tradition. Art is the heritage of all mankind for it is innate in every human being. It arises originally from purely practical purposes in the formation of tools and other objects, and stems also from a desire for communication. The question of Jewish art has always presented a problem. What first comes to mind in dealing with this question is the admonition given at Mt. Sinai: "You shall not make for yourself any statue or picture." Now one can understand the meaning of this text in two ways: either as a prohibition of all representative art in general, or as a prohibition only of specifically idolatrous art.

Even though Jewish law had an aversion to figurative art, artistic expression, far from being prohibited, was actually encouraged. It was created either for educational purposes or for what is known as *Hiddurmitzvah*, that is the adornment of the implements of ritual. There was always a role for art in Judaism. The art of embellishing biblical ritual, legal or even secular books was one of the most important ways a Jew could express his devotion to the written word.

Although biblical Judaism had the second commandment regarding graven images, there was never any prohibition of artistic expression. No fear of idolatry can be detected in the detailed instructions given by Moses on how to build the tabernacle and its ritual implements, including specific details of how to adorn

the Ark with two winged cherubim, between whom God dwelt. This evidence would indicate that from the very earliest time, regardless of the ancient law prohibiting idol worship, the Jew's need for artistic expression was acknowledged.

The existence of a mid-third century synagogue in *Dura Europos* on the Euphrates which had its entire wall covered with frescoes of biblical stories is vitally important. The paintings which do not show the correct biblical sequence, portray episodes from the lives of the patriarchs, the prophets and the kings. Although these pictures are significant for their symbolic value, they also indicate that pictorial art was very much alive and was part of the experience of the Jewish people. In many synagogues today there is a renaissance of Jewish art evidenced in the art exhibits and the building of Judaica museums.

"This is my God and I will beautify Him." It is thus that rabbinic tradition rendered the verse in Exodus 15:2, a rendering that required that all the objects Jews use in the performance of religious duties shall be aesthetically pleasing so that they may truly worship God in the beauty of holiness.

The rabbis interpreted these verses later in the *Midrash* in this form: "Adorn thy self before Him in the performance of the commandments. Make before Him a goodly booth, and a goodly palm branch, and a goodly ram's horn, a *shofar*, and a goodly fringe for your garments, and a beautiful cover for the Torah and bind it up with beautiful wrappings." Jewish ceremonial objects revolved around religious worship both in the synagogue and the home. Their history and their forms are as different as Judaism is in its very basic teachings. Certain ceremonial objects were introduced by different leaders at different times and in different cultures.

Today there is an urgent need for

skilled craftsmen both among Jews and non-Jews to create new ideas for ceremonial art. The tragedy is that we have been inundated with cheap tinny ceremonial objects made in Japan which have no artistic value and which degrade the spiritual value of many of our ceremonial objects. We need a new kind of perception of ceremonial art by those who have the knowledge, understanding and wisdom to create the kind of ceremonial art which will inspire the future of our tradition.

The ceremonial art of the Jewish people testifies to the diversity of Judaism, for not only did the form and decoration of the ceremonial objects vary from country to country, and from century to century, but with special objects used for different purposes. It revealed the flexibility and the adaptability of Judaism which introduced new objects as a way of life. Art in the Jewish tradition has a role to play today to introduce new objects and to bring them into the community and into the homes of Jewish people. There is a need growing out of the dominant cultural environment to create ceremonial objects which will enhance the aesthetic beauty of home and synagogue. Today there are fewer artisans than in the past, and we need to cultivate a whole school of those who are interested in obtaining a background and knowledge of the Jewish tradition. For all its diversity, Jewish ceremonial art displays an essential unity — the striving of the Jew at all times to fulfill his religious obligations to God in the "beauty of holiness." Today, we need artisans to create the aura of the beauty of holiness, dedicated artisans who, through knowledge, understanding and great aesthetic skill can create the atmosphere from which there can and must grow a new era of creative development.

Synagogue has always been the heart and center of the life and spirit

* Extract from address at 1975 National Interfaith Conference on Religion & Architecture, San Antonio, Tex.

of the Jewish people since the tragic days of the destruction of the First Temple. The divine command given to Moses: "Make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them," (Exodus 25:8), was a serious injunction to Moses. The commentaries state that Moses was shocked by this command and felt terribly inadequate to the monumental task. He did not have the skill nor training nor artistic sensitivity to carry it through. He therefore called upon the architect Bezalel. It was Bezalel who became the model for Talmudic sages. They ascribed to him the spiritual and artistic qualities for which all future architects would strive in order to achieve the ideal sanctuary.

In the building of synagogues today, architects face a challenge: what is the role of art for the religious community. It is necessary that the architect as artist has a firm understanding of what he is creating. The synagogue has been a house of prayer, study and assembly. Does the architect/artist seek a unity of these components when he begins to design? Is he creating a monument to himself or is he creating something which truly speaks of the function of the synagogue and its spiritual intent? Is it essential to evoke the sacred, the awesome, the greatness of Israel's concept of God? Is it essential to express the concept of an ideal historic community and its closeness and intimacy? Is it necessary to invite a restful and mysterious element which evokes a spirit of retreat and contemplation?

The problem of the architect in many ways stems from a failure to understand the problems. The absence of a clear conception of the synagogue function forces the architect to concentrate on the congregant's desire for physical comfort, but he fails to understand the historic, the spiritual as well as the moral force which goes into the making of the specific atmosphere of the synagogue. The creation of such an atmosphere is either left to chance or is so vague that it comes through in the artist's misconception of what a synagogue should and must be in terms of its function and its purpose."

Last year my colleague and classmate, Dr. Eugene Mihaly, a noted and distinguished Jewish scholar,

dealt with this question in his paper on the architect as a liturgist. In his paper he emphasized the necessity of bringing poetry, art, drama and the music of the synagogue — its space, light and sound — into an intrinsic unity. He also pointed out that the very design of the religious structure of the sanctuary, of the Ark, of the Eternal Light, of the Menorah were, in a sense, acts of prayer in themselves. He also suggested that the very silence of the Talmud on synagogue architecture stemmed from the fact that the individual Jew was considered the central vehicle of Judaism, and that the concept "God stands in the midst of the congregation," as well as the prophetic distrust of composing buildings (Jeremiah 7:4), suggests the design of a synagogue "which will not overwhelm nor draw primarily attention to itself," but will create instead an atmosphere which intensifies the worshipper's awareness that he is truly in the temple of his Maker. Dr. Mihaly makes this challenge: "We would ask the architect that he design a structure which would enhance the feeling that the synagogue is of the past, yet of the present and future; that one is removed within the synagogue, yet deeply involved in the world, its problems and its tasks; that one is part of a group without losing the sense of individuality; that one stands in God's presence, but with the dignity of one who is worthy of His concern and of one who is created in His image; that the Jew is of the total community, yet bears special witness." Thus, there are polarities which do exist and which are part of our tradition, but they are not resolved in prayer, and they may not be resolved in the creative insights and development of the artist himself. The most important task of the religious architect is not only to school himself in the tradition of that which he is creating, but likewise to create in his design a symbol of the problem of Jewish worship which begins with praise and ends with petition. The sanctuary has come to mean to the Jew not only a submission to God's will, but a challenge and a commitment to go forth and do his tasks in the world.

Thus, today the synagogue as a house of prayer, study and assembly

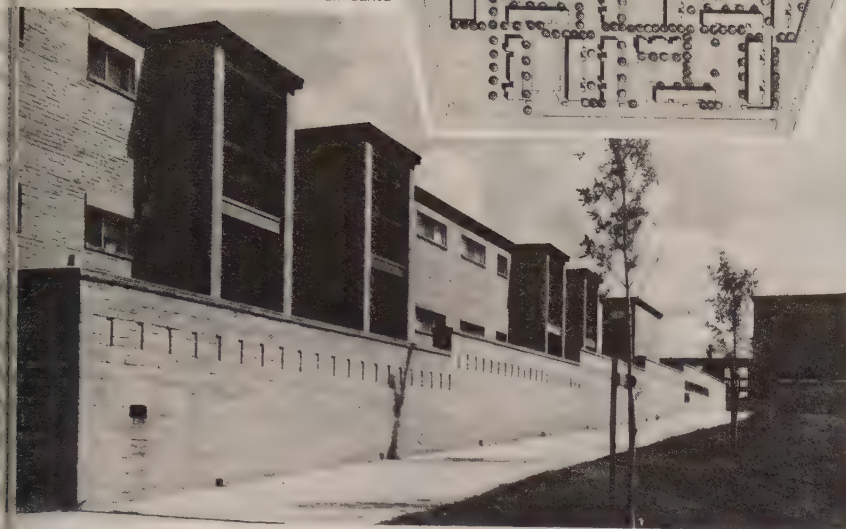
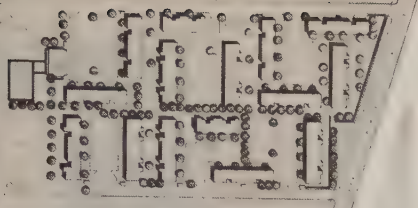
must in a sense all be coordinated in one room. This goal is difficult to achieve, and is perhaps a serious challenge to many architects who are commissioned to design and build a synagogue. Knowledge of Jewish sources, understanding of their scope and ideals, all have to be blended into one unified whole. Discourse and study have always been an integral part of Jewish worship. The Jew never prayed without study, and there was never study without prayer. Prayer led to study and study led to prayer. At the same time, the synagogue was also a place of assembly and of social gathering.

There are three parts to the historic development of Judaism: creation, revelation and redemption. The sanctuary in a sense fulfills these three historic symbols: the Eternal Light is the symbol of creation for God said, "Let there be light." The Ark where the Scrolls of the Law are kept is the symbol of revelation for it was the Ark that carried the tablets of the Law which Moses brought down from Mt. Sinai. The pulpit, or what is called the *bimah*, from which we read the Law and deliver the sermon is the symbol of redemption for it is from these platforms that the ideal of the new redemption is brought to the congregation. The architect must somehow communicate the feeling of creation, revelation and redemption. In so doing, he is fulfilling a great tradition.

At the same, the architect must make his artistic design functional. He must be in contact with the entire staff of the synagogue to understand their problems and needs. His design must encompass beauty, function and practicality. In my own congregation my predecessor, the late Rabbi A. L. Krohn, worked carefully with the architect to design a building that would have the Jewish spiritual imprint of tradition, but would at the same time fit into the functional needs of building a sanctuary in the desert. It was vitally important to have a large open temple patio and court. This has served as an outdoor sanctuary for many of the congregation's holidays and festivals. In the fall Jews remember the festival of Tabernacles, *Succot*, with the building of a booth. In our patio we all gather with our families to sit

Cont. p. 29

Eli Cantu

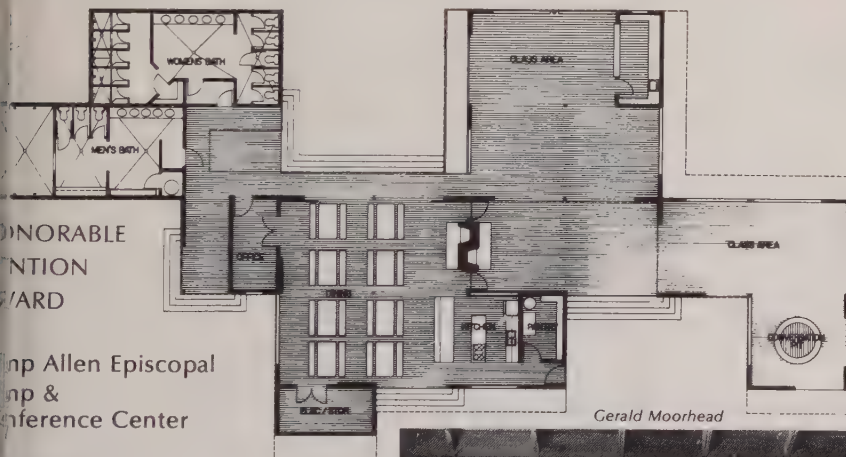


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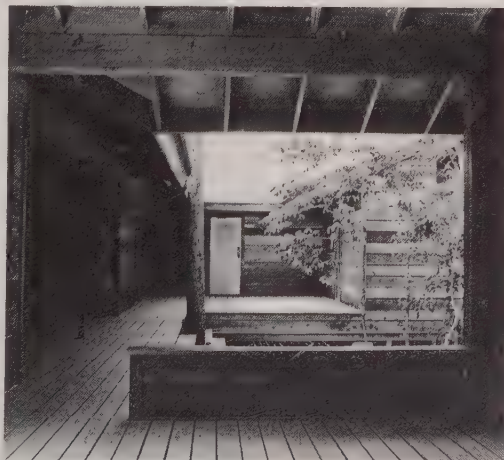
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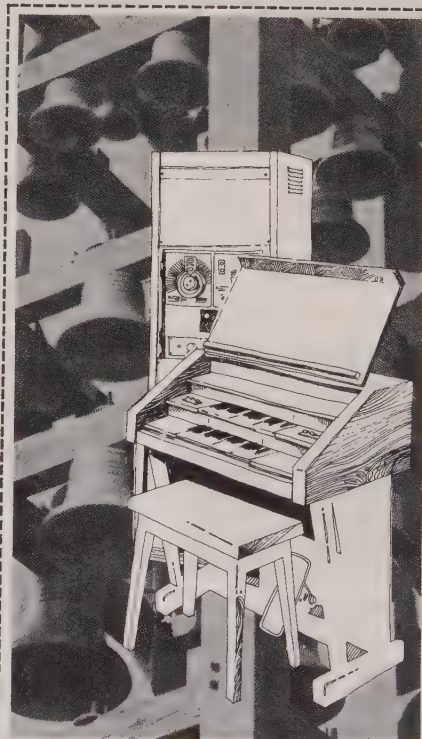
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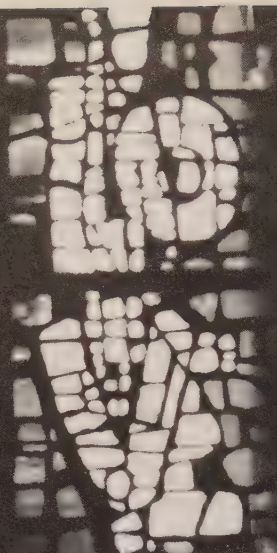
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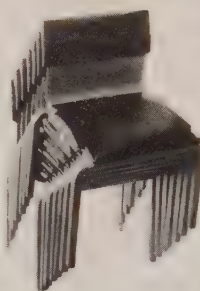


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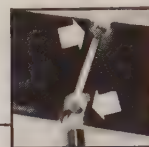
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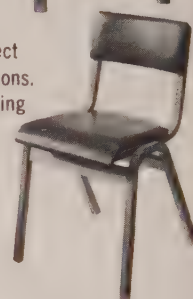
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1975 SAN ANTONIO CONFERENCE — REFLECTIONS

by

The Rev. Richard A. McAlister, O.P.
Art Center College of Design
Los Angeles, Cal.

San Antonio was my first experience of the National Conference on Religion and Architecture. Not only did I find it interesting, but I found it most helpful to my own work and growth as a designer. In recent months I have been doing intensive graduate study on the nature of the worship environment, dealing with its theological, psychological and environmental aspects. San Antonio clarified many of my own ideas and set in proper focus the nature of the problem. My desire to share these thoughts is with the hope that you in turn will reflect more intently upon those qualities which make a good worship environment. I wish first to state some conclusions which seem valid to me from my study, reading and discussions at San Antonio. I will then deal in some detail about a few of these conclusions.

1. It is the theological perspective which ought to determine the nature and the characteristics of the worship environment, and conversely it is the ritual of worship, in the environment, which manifests the theological beliefs of a worshiping community. Since we come from a diversity of theological backgrounds, it is important that we recognize that not all worship solutions will be valid for each faith group without doing some harm to the very faith of the people involved. Unless we are keenly aware of the interaction between theological perspective, ritual and environment, our worship designs could easily have harmful implications for the very faith of a people.

2. The attempt to demythologize religion and religious architecture under the guise of deepening one's faith is more likely to weaken the faith rather than help it. The myth expresses a faith value. Tampering with the myth, whether to destroy it totally or to replace it with a new mythical symbol, tends to weaken the faith value it expresses.

3. Many ministers and architects at

the Conference acknowledged that their congregations were not ready to accept multi-use space for worship, nor were their people prepared to give up the distinction between sacred and profane space.

4. Young people, from my own experience, are not satisfied with multi-use space for worship. While they may not be enamored of the traditional church space, neither are they receptive to the modern alternative. For their personal communing with the divine, they express the need for a place "set apart." While worship itself is a community activity, and not a time for purely personal prayer, the need expressed by the young must be provided for.

5. Those architects who are sincere in a call for the use of secular space for sacred action demand an architecture which is authentic, of high quality and the like. In effect, the qualities which they ask for in their architecture are those very qualities which instill respect, reverence and ultimately, a sense of the sacred. It really seems impossible to escape from the sacred qualities. One may denigrate the formal distinction between sacred and profane, but in practice one uses the qualities of the sacred.

6. The many qualities which make up the so-called "sacred space" are really psychological qualities common to man and necessary for a fully developed life. If you deny these qualities to the worship environment, they will reappear in other areas of life; one cannot go against the nature of man.

7. People who insist upon sacred space for worship may not be defending sacred space so much as the human quality of permanence. When a space is set aside for worship, a sense of permanence is experienced. This sense of stability is as important in worship as it is in other areas of life.

8. The church is the people who

make it up. What the church, the people, believe, feel, and want, is therefore important. A pastor or architect cannot validly design a worship environment unless serious reflection is given to the needs and wants of the people, even though these may be contrary to what the pastor or the architect wants. The people are not a client to be sold a bill of goods. They are the very embodiment of the life of God in the community, and as such must be respected and listened to.

Although these are not gratuitous statements on my part — for they do come from much study and reflection — much more specific study will have to be done in these areas before we can have valid judgments that will guide us in designing worship environments. And this is precisely our problem. There is much theorizing about worship environments, but little evaluation of existing structures to verify these theories. Much is written about doing away with the distinction between sacred and profane, but what studies do we have that verify the lack of such a distinction? What is the relationship between the sacred and the normal psychological needs of man? If there is a genuine relationship, then one would need be cautious in dismissing the distinction. How much longer can we argue for multi-use space for worship without doing some serious evaluation of the effect of this space upon the spiritual well being of people? One phase of my graduate studies at the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles is a model test designed to evaluate the perceptual response variables of people in their choice of worship environments. The test deals with the non-verbal responses of people. We hope that a pattern of choice will evolve from the test which will give us further insight into the subconscious needs and wants of people as regards the worship envi-

ronment. Such a study will help us see the relationship between the psychological needs of man and his liturgical needs. It may even show that some present-day theory is in conflict with the way people really are. In any case, much more study needs to be done. Robert Sommer, a psychologist at the University of California, Davis, in his book *Personal Space*, argues that for every building built, a fee should be allocated to evaluate the building one year after its completion. This would reveal its good and strong points, and would be of value to architects in future building. The same procedure would be of tremendous value for buildings for worship. My observations in this article should show that some current theories of worship and its environment are at least questionable and need further study.

The Guild for Religious Architecture acknowledges its ecumenical na-

ture and fully realizes the various theological bases present. It would seem superfluous, therefore, to ask that this diversity of theological perspectives be kept in mind when we discuss the worship situation. Yet it seems to me that such a distinction is terribly important to a congregation and its architect when they decide to build. The plans ultimately chosen should reflect the theological perspectives of that congregation and should not be the reflections of other congregations holding a different theological viewpoint. Otherwise the building will become a source of divisiveness in the community for whom it was designed and will manifest the confusion in the faith concept which binds the community together. We know, for example, that those religions which have strong sacramental systems and which depend heavily upon symbolism to express their faith, will necessarily see

their worship environment quite differently from those religions which are personalist, non-sacramental and limited in symbolic expression.

There is a great cry today to de-mythologize religion and religious architecture in order to humanize it. Such an effort can have the salutary effect of cleansing the faith of many unnecessary accretions over the years, but the humanization process can just as easily weaken the spiritual dimension of religion. The famed dictum, *lex orandi, lex credendi* (as the church prays, so does it believe) should be kept in mind. Ritual and symbols are the language through which diverse peoples are united in a communion of faith to express their common belief in God and to praise Him. When you tamper with this language, you tamper with the belief expressed by this special language. When the building for worship involves a changing of the ritual ex-

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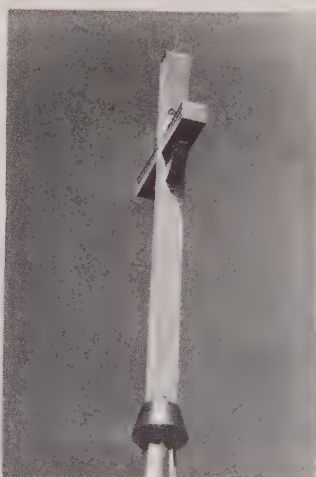
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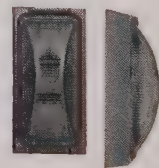
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pression of belief, then it has truly affected the belief itself. Consequently, it is necessary that the architect fully appreciate the theological perspective of the community for whom he designs. We might note that in the Roman Catholic Church the emphasis upon public worship and the de-emphasis of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament has had an obvious effect upon the depth of belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. This has come about in America because many churches which had the Blessed Sacrament centered in the church, have now relegated the Sacrament to a side altar or to a private chapel. Those entering the church today are not always sure where the Sacrament is, and they become confused. They do not know whether they should genuflect out of reverence, or presume that it is elsewhere. Younger people coming to worship where the

Sacrament has been placed in a private chapel are not aware that the private chapel is there, and they are not as inclined to make private visits, nor sense a need to, such as their parents had. We see, therefore, that a change in the customary place for reservation of the Eucharist has caused confusion among Catholics, young and old, and it can affect actual belief in the Real Presence.

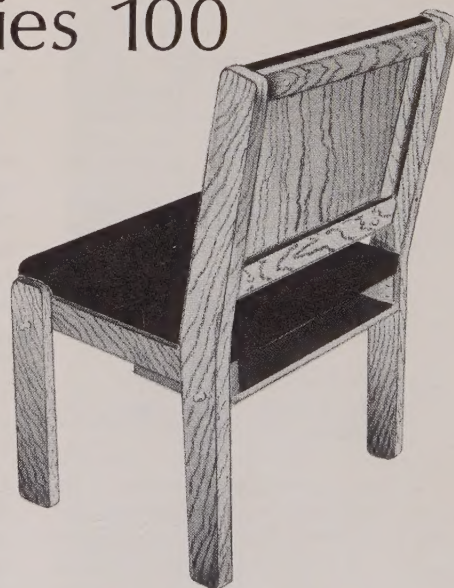
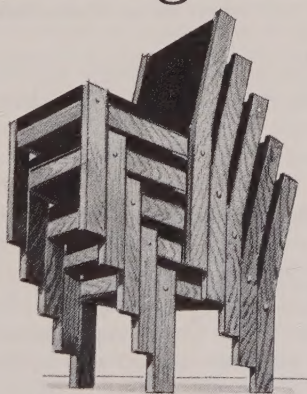
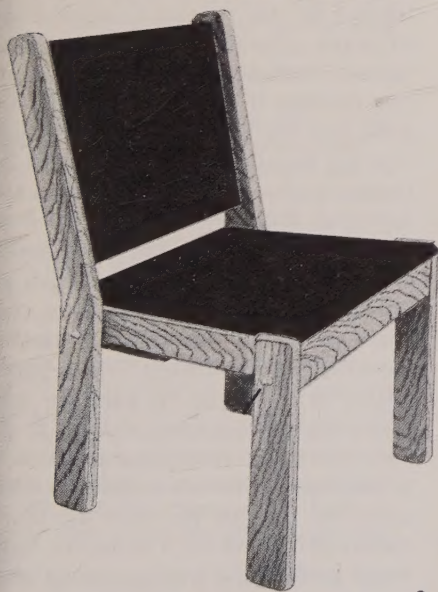
The Spring '75 issue of FAITH & FORM carries an article by Peter Smith on Post Religious churches. He offers a different theological perspective. He says, "By now it should be clear that I take my stand with prophets like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who believe that Christ came to admit the post religious age. . . . Christ was the ultimate secular man . . . in his life style there was no division between the sacred and the secular. . . . It follows that a community which claims to follow Christ

should express itself through architecture which is as secular and as sacred as schools and shopping centers." "A church style implies a stylized outlook, which is incompatible with an emergency faith, living to optimize the passing minute." ". . . the Church . . . needs symbols, but it needs new ones; many of the traditional symbols have become case-hardened, no longer conveying the mind to a reality above and beyond themselves." Peter Smith has used his understanding of Bonhoeffer to evolve his own architectural ideology. I would not advocate Smith's architectural ideology should I wish to build a worship environment for Roman Catholics. Moreover, I question the validity of his statements. The pilgrim church, living the constant uncertainty of this moment of life, sounds too much like the party line of those who ad-

Cont. p. 28

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McAlister — Cont. from p. 27

vocate the notion that the confusion of modern life and its uncertainty are the norm, and that one should not seek a more stable existence. I see this more as an expression of despair in a difficult situation and the rationalizing of one's way out of a situation instead of facing it. What proof do we have that the symbols of faith are dead? A gratuitous statement does not make it so. And if the symbol is *passee*, what is the faith value which the symbol expressed? If we are to create new symbols, they should be expressive of the faith value of the old symbol. How do we go about making new symbols? Rituals and symbols to be effective have to transcend the fads of the moment. Remember the early 60's and all the new ideas that seemed to be the salvation of religion. Many of them are already *passee*. It was during those times that vigil lights were almost viciously removed from our churches as having no value. It was not long, however, until candles appeared in college dorms and communes. The young had discovered the mystical value of candlelight. But the church was still very busily discarding this ancient symbol as being of no value. We really must be cautious about removing symbols. I agree that some may well have served their usefulness, but when do we know that they have?

What is this secularity of Christ of which Peter Smith speaks? Just how secular was Christ? Our Lord asserted that he preached, not himself, but his heavenly Father. That is hardly a secular statement. Christ did not seek human glory or comfort but only the glory of his heavenly Father. That is hardly being secular. The argument that Christ made no distinction between sacred and profane is highly questionable. I agree that Christ used the ordinary things of life, but if we take the dictionary definition of sacred as that which is "set apart," then Christ, in practice, did make a distinction between the sacred and the profane. Before Christ entered his public life, he went into the desert to fast and pray. He set himself apart. At the time of the Last Supper, the Passover meal, he ordered his disciples to go to an upper room and prepare things. He did not

eat among the people, nor in a restaurant, but in an upper room, a place set apart. At Gethsemane, Christ did not pray among the sleeping apostles, but as St. Luke tells us, "He withdrew himself from them about a stone's throw." He once again set himself apart. In all these important prayer moments of Christ's life, he did set himself apart from others. Given our definition of sacred, it seems evident that Christ lived the distinction between sacred and profane, although he may not have spoken of the distinction. How do we interpret the words of Peter, "You are a royal and holy priesthood, a People set apart"? It should be apparent that different theological perspectives will affect how we build.

One last thought in this regard. Peter Smith, in the aforementioned article, discusses the sanctuary, the sacred zone, and the *balchino*. He says: "Not only do these devices conspire to establish the myth of locational holiness, they also confer 'ex officio' sacrality on all who are permitted to perform liturgical acts within the 'high place.' So the hierarchical element in the ecclesiastical structure is discretely reinforced." For Smith the hierarchical character of religion is not to be encouraged. A building designed to blur the hierarchical nature of worship would be offensive to the religious sensibilities of many. Conrad Antonsen, O.P., Roman Catholic liturgist at Dominican College in San Rafael, Cal., argues that the basis of ritual worship is to be found in the 24th chapter of Exodus with Moses at Mt. Sinai. He says that the hierarchical nature of worship is seen as one of its essential characteristics and it is a constant in Roman Catholic worship from the earliest times. A Roman Catholic worship environment, therefore, which is designed to exclude this hierarchical character strikes at its very concept of worship and belief. It is important that an architect called upon to design worship environments for those of a different faith really understand and be sympathetic to the beliefs of those for whom he works. He is not asked to believe those beliefs, but he is asked to respect them and not to offer a design which will contradict what that particular community believes. ■

Bemporad — Cont. from p. 16

difficult aspiration is by saying that one's task is to know oneself — that is, the task to know oneself is to be committed to the task of knowing oneself without end.

The first thing religion has to do is to confront the issues of whether man really is an animal or not. And here may I say that we have to say No. We have to say that the Freudians, the Skinnerians, the Freudians with their territorial imperative are all basically wrong. Man is not an animal to be manipulated. Man is a spiritual being, a symbolic being, and if man is genuinely made in God's image, then he cannot simply act like an animal. Here is the crux: The evil man perpetrates a corruption of something that transcends animality. Animals don't create a hydrogen bomb that can destroy the world. As Arthur Koestler has pointed out: "What makes man fight is not the biological urge to defend his personal acreage or farmland or meadows, but his loyalty to symbols and slogans derived from tribal lore, divine commandments or political ideologies. In other words, wars are not fought for territory but for words." And so the critical issue that religion has to face in our time is the corruption of the best, the politicizing of values. You go from Eugene Debs to Lofa, from Marx to Krushchev, from Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence to Nixon and the Watergate tapes. Values are constantly transformed and corrupted. And this is the critical issue of our times. It is not enough merely to say yes, let's stand for spirituality. We have to be very clear as to the nature of man so that he can stand for spirituality.

Now we're talking about religious institutions. I think the hardest thing for a person to do today is to pray. And if he's going to pray, he's going to have to have a place that shall be a continuous reminder that man is more than flesh and bone, more than a thing to be abused, to be manipulated — but a being made in the image of God — that is, a sacred entity.

It seems to me that a religious house of worship is needed to instill in us a sense of awe and reverence, a sense of absolute worth without which all is devalued and as its price. It is here also that man can renew his deepest and profoundest search for God and the things of the spirit that nourish and sustain. And this is what presents us with our task. We're discussing the role of religious architecture and religious institutions at a time of uncertainty, confusion and doubt. This act in itself, in my opinion, is an act of faith, a belief that religion can be meaningful and that the past may throw some light — however dim — on the present and the future.

Only by engaging in love do we become more loving; in justice, more just; in education, more learned. And though we do not know fully what wisdom or love or God is, still by searching for wisdom we become wiser, by sharing love, more loving, and by seeking God, more Godly. I think that if I were to take a verse from the Bible which characterizes our

age, I would take the verse from the prophet Amos, eighth chapter, eleventh verse which says: "There will be a hunger and a thirst but not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water, but a hunger and a thirst for the word of God." And that's where we are today. ■

Plotkin — Cont. from p. 22

around the *Succah*, and the weather, climate and design make possible the enjoyment of a wonderful festival spirit.

Every religious institution should encourage and nurture the creative talents of its membership — through art displays, the development of Judaica museums and libraries. In addition to individual efforts, there is strength in unity when a number of congregations join together in an art festival. Our Temple belongs to the North Phoenix Corporate Ministry, made up of six Protestant congregations, one Roman Catholic church and two synagogues — one Reform and the other Conservative. For the past three years we have all combined our efforts to produce a truly beautiful art festival of religious tradition. Each congregation encourages its members to submit works of art which have religious feeling and motivation. This has created an ecumenical understanding of the arts. The Catholic begins to appreciate what the Jewish artist is doing and the Protestant understands better his Catholic neighbor. Each festival has had a theme, and the theme has inspired the creative achievement.

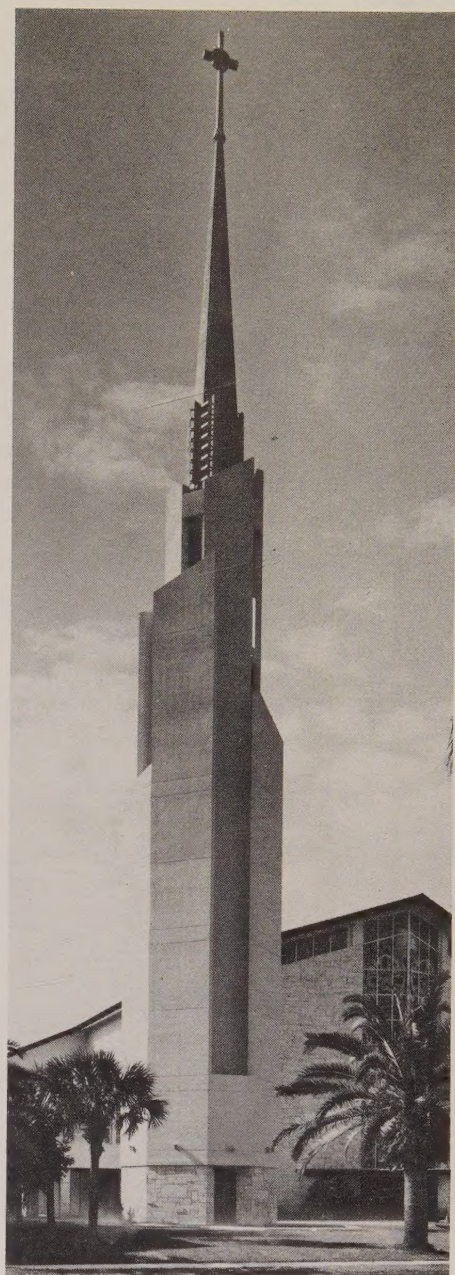
The role that art can play in the synagogue needs intelligent investigation and discussion on the part of the artists and art historians on the one hand, and rabbis and interested lay people on the other. Out of this confrontation may emerge a deeper understanding of art — an understanding that will not only enrich our faith, but may in addition enhance our sense of beauty, awe and spirituality. ■

Wood — Cont. from p. 15

ple, honest narrative proposing that truly good design is based on simplicity and honesty. An earlier tour of his chapel at Trinity University proved that such a basic philosophy can produce great architecture and great art.

This spirit of honesty and simplicity was also evident at the very beginning of the conference when Margaret Cousins sat on the river bank and told why San Antonio was her city. It was echoed in Rabbi Bemporad's excellent presentation (also published here), when he spoke of "a sense of absolute worth without which all is devalued and has its price."

It was hopefully the philosophy which was carried home by those who attended the 1975 Conference — a philosophy applicable to all areas of art and architecture. It is equally applicable to the liturgy of religion which attempts to symbolize the simple relationship of love between man and God. May it ever remain so. ■



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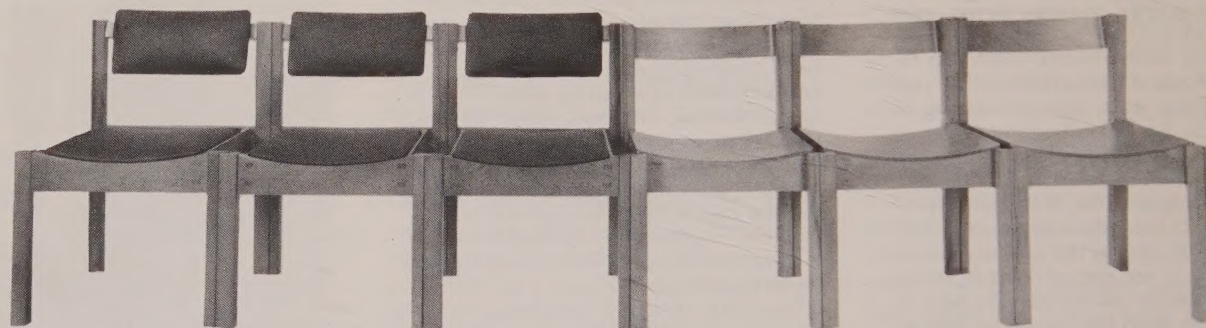
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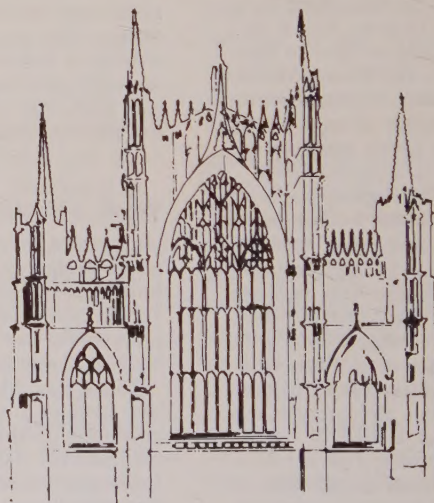


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